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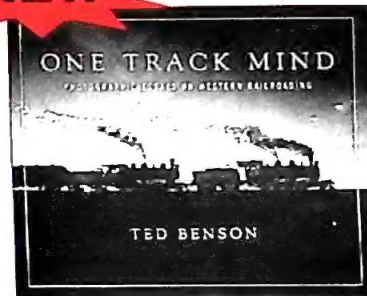
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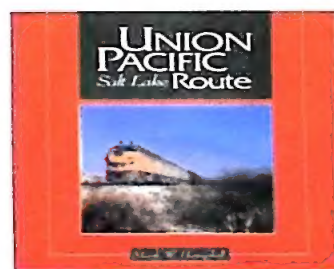
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In May 1958, a Canadian National 2-8-2 helps a 4-8-4 lift a Toronto-bound freight past Bayview Junction, near the steam stronghold of Hamilton, Ontario (see page 82). Philip R. Hastings photo.



Classic Trains

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF RAILROADING

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ON THE COVER: NYC Alco FA's lead a freight near Jersey Shore, Pa., at the south end of Pine Creek Gorge—the "Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania"—in 1952. A decade later, FA's were in NYC's exotic diesel mix in Detroit (page 42). William P. Price photo; Al Chione collection.

A special time

THE MIDDLE FOUR DECADES of the 20th century were special for North America's railroads. Steam locomotives and passenger trains reached their zenith, then faded away. A profusion of diesels brightened the postwar scene. Piggybacking and other advances changed the face of freight. Long-established companies and operating practices vanished forever.

In each of CLASSIC TRAINS' four issues per year, we'll take you back to this special time with historical studies like Joe Welsh's "Streamliners to the Sunshine State," personal recollections like Vernon Smith's "Night Passage," and visual celebrations like Phil Hastings' "Steam Stronghold." Our "Great Photographers" series kicks off with "Stan Kistler's L.A." We'll look at classic railroads in "Fallen Flags Remembered," starting this issue with Ron Flanary's Louisville & Nashville tribute. "The Way It Was" presents a selection of first-person stories. In "A Classic Year," we hit the highlights of a given year; this time, it's 1966. "Bumping Post" closes each issue with a visit to a great passenger terminal. "Fast Mail," our letters column, will debut next issue; let us know what you think by writing to the address at right, or e-mailing us at fastmail@classictrainsmag.com.

Whether you lived through the "golden years" era, caught just the tail end of it (as I did), or know it only through words and pictures, we hope you'll enjoy the ride in the pages of CLASSIC TRAINS.



ROB MCGONIGAL

Robert S. McGonigal

Robert S. McGonigal



Editor	Robert S. McGonigal
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Editorial Staff	Kevin P. Keefe J. David Ingles
Contributing Editor	John Gruber
Graphic Designer	Colby Waller
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Editorial
Phone: (262) 796-8776
E-mail: editor@classictrainsmag.com
Fax: (262) 796-6468

Display Advertising sales
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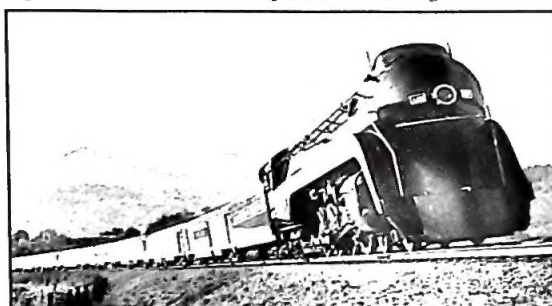
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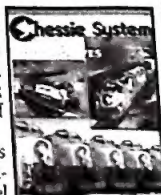
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The Golden Years

A classic state of mind

OR THOSE OF US of a certain age or certain frame of mind, there was a "classic" era of railroading. It emerged from the tumult of the 1920's, defined itself in the heroic struggles of the Depression and War years, and slowly waned until changes in government policy and a primal urge to survive ignited the industry's present cycle of modernization and redefinition.

We know that era now only in fragments: as a melange of reflected memories, an archeology of pieces and places, and if we are fortunate, enough first-hand experience to leaven nostalgia with a healthy dose of realism. It is so close as to be within living memory—and as remote and irretrievable as a New York Central Hudson racing westward with a sleek Henry Dreyfuss consist.

In those middle decades of the 20th century, the railroad attained maximum reach and mature stature. It formed the bedrock of American industry and commerce, operating in a three-way partnership with its customers and the government. Railroading's role was unambiguous: to ensure mobility and economic fluidity throughout the vast reaches of continental North America.

During this time, the relative size, intensity, form, and texture of railroading remained constant in most essentials. Neither maximum axle loadings, dispatched horsepower per ton, average time over the road, nor fundamental traffic patterns changed dramatically. The industry's overall philosophy remained more-or-less intact from the 1920's through the 1970's—which is to say, railroading was undercapitalized, over-regulated, on the defensive, and based on boxcars 40 or 50 feet long.

Yet these decades comprise a remarkable series of creative bursts, occurring between and among three of the most significant challenges ever faced by an American industry: the

Great Depression, World War II, and sustained, egregious government favoritism toward competing transport modes. Any one of these could have overwhelmed railroading as we know it. That the industry survived is surprising; that it continuously reinvented itself is nothing less than amazing.

Throughout the classic era, railroading embraced a bewildering array of possibilities, from the sublime (mechanical air conditioning) to the ridiculous (atomic powered locomotives). The options available to creative executives were staggering: new metallurgy, the perfection of internal combustion, advances in electronics and control theory, and innovative ways of dispatching trains. Research and development blossomed after World War I,

and railroads partook fully of advances in basic science and the burst of applied technology.

Big money bet on revolutionary change in railroading. General Motors built its La Grange complex as a commitment to a differ-



W. F. POSTLES

ent thermodynamic future. The installation of CTC and ABS signaling systems at the rate of thousands of miles per year was expensive, effective, and just one of the unheralded success stories of mid-century railroading. For every Baldwin Locomotive Works struggling to make a transition, there was an upstart—a Budd Company, a Fairbanks-Morse, a Timken—willing to gamble on new technologies and industry innovation.

Nor was this a period of small thinking. The Moffat and Cascade tunnels, well-engineered cut-offs, impressive bridges, and massive gravity yards enhanced capacity and drove efficiency upward. Ever-larger locomotives set new records for tonnage moved and speed attained. For the first time, equipment bumped up against real physical limitations in size and weight. Perhaps the biggest thinking took place in railroad boardrooms, where the out-

By John P. Hankey

lines of today's corporate Leviathans took form.

Railroading long had exemplified the well-integrated technological system. But in the classic years, that imperative found ultimate expression in the brilliantly executed electrification of Pennsy's eastern lines, or the monumental civic architecture of Ohio's Cincinnati and Cleveland terminals. In ways undreamt-of even a few decades previous, railroads knitted together far-flung operations like steel production, food distribution, fuel extraction, and manufacturing into continental enterprises of unprecedented effectiveness.

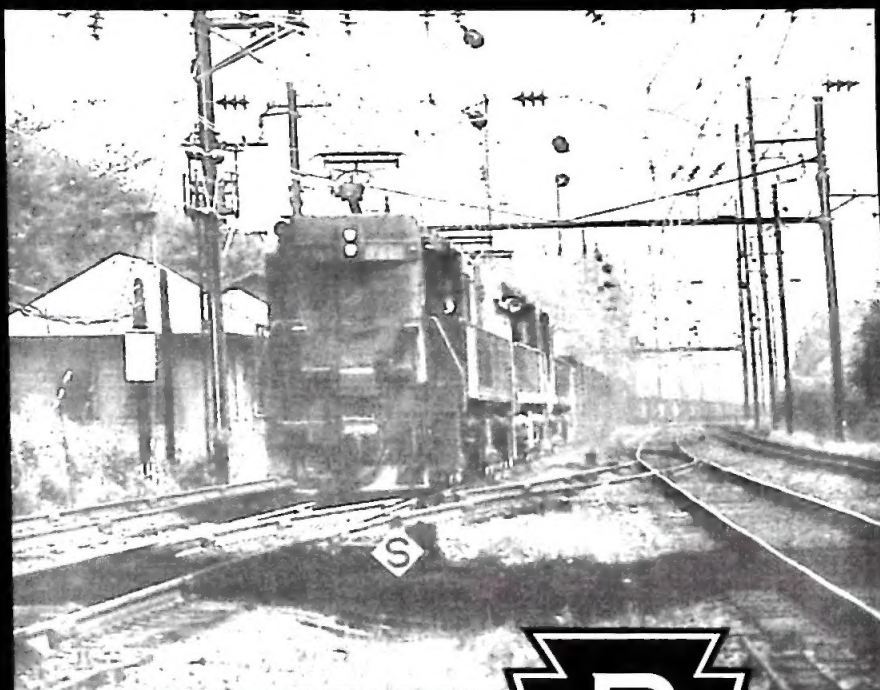
Think, too, of the implications of 250,000 miles of track and the built environment that came with it—the railroad towns, interlocking towers, telegraph offices, and water tanks. Mid-century railroading was a dense overlay of one system atop another, all dedicated to placing the right boxcar on the right siding or causing a Dutch door to be opened at a lonely station platform at a predetermined time.

Those systems required people, a million-and-a-half railroad men and women at any given time building locomotives, printing timetables, and accounting for a couple of million freight and passenger cars. Their experiences presaged the social and cultural shifts that, by some measures, make *today* the "good-old days." The struggles of railroad labor, A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and women entering the railroad workforce during World War II foretold later campaigns for equal opportunity. Classic railroading was not simply a story of machines and operations, and we are the better for it.

Railroading was external, it was colorful, and it was fully engaged in the life of the country. It lived and breathed everywhere across the land, from the dimmest piney woods of the South to the farthest Western deserts. Rails pushed through alpine canyons, defined urban neighborhoods, and crisscrossed the prairie with a density such that no farmer was more than a couple dozen miles from the market. Magazine readers thought nothing of seeing railroad subjects on the covers of *Life*, *Time*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*.

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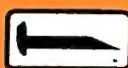


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Railroading also was democratic, participatory, and available on a retail basis at the nearest ticket office or Railway Express Agency platform. Railroad work was easier to find, and, some would argue, more rewarding than today. If that didn't appeal, there were more than a thousand pages in the *Official Guide*, and most companies tolerated, and sometimes welcomed, the enthusiast with a camera.

The companies actually cared what ordinary people thought of them. They made that plain on the trains, in the press, and each week during the AAR-sponsored *Railroad Hour* radio show. Railroads, in other words, were citizens. And like citizens, they came in all shapes and sizes and ideologies, from the aristocratic to the humble. They were the creations of human beings, not of ruthless profit imperatives.

Although we now, and may always, view the steam-to-diesel transition years as the heart of the classic era, its boundaries are delightfully subject to continuing reinterpretation. That opens the fascinating possibility that a generation hence, SD40-2's and Amfleet coaches will blend seamlessly with *Daylights* and *Hiawathas* in a golden haze of compressed memory.

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Big steam, little freight cars, mohair plush, sculpted diesels—no period matches the diversity and accomplishment of what AAR vice-president and railroad booster Robert Selph Henry styled *This Fascinating Railroad Business*. Permit yourself to be transported to another place, another time zone, another reality. For that, after all, is what railroading is all about. ■

JOHN P. HANKEY is a historian, former curator of the B&O Railroad Museum, and frequent contributor to railroad publications. He's currently in research residence at the University of Chicago.

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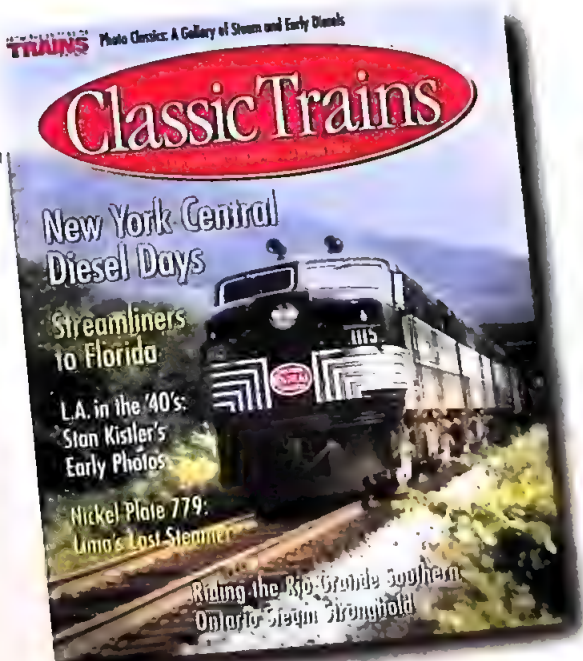
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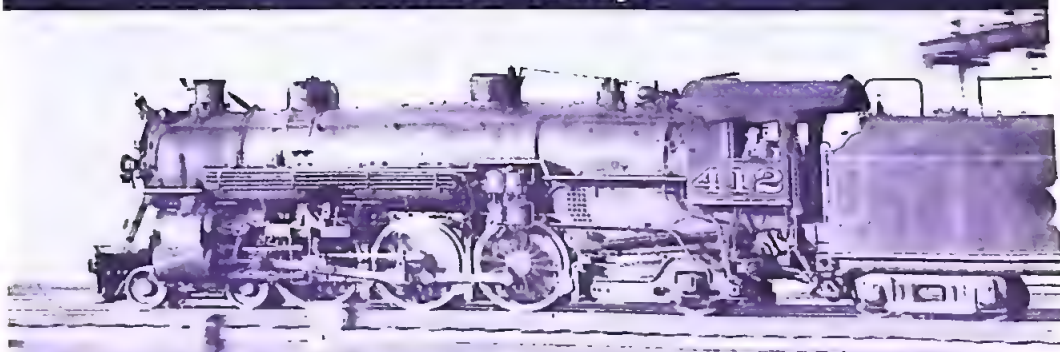
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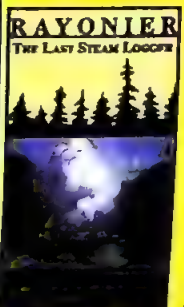
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ATHER 'ROUND, if you will, for a birthday celebration. We have a large cake decorated with some candles—150 to be exact. The year 2000 marks the sesquicentennial of one of the South's truly classic transportation enterprises, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company.

It was on March 5, 1850, that the Kentucky legislature approved a charter for the L&N. The first through train operated between L&N's namesake end points in 1859. Had it not been for dynamic leadership, vision, money, and some luck, the L&N might not have matured beyond this original route and three branches. But in fact, through acquisition and construction, key routes to Memphis, Birmingham, New Orleans, Atlanta, St. Louis, and Cincinnati were added to the fold in the three decades following the Civil War. By 1969, the company flag was planted in Chicago through acquisition of a portion of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois (with a second route in 1971, when the Monon was added). Unlike several railroads whose corporate names were exaggerated statements of their true geographic reach, the L&N greatly eclipsed the limits of its original end points. (The railroad briefly flirted with the more imposing name of "Louisville & Nashville & Great Southern,"

but stuck with its chartered title.)

L&N was conservative, and profitable (it would continue to pay stock dividends, even through most of the Great Depression). Always a Kentucky road at heart, its huge system shop complex at South Louisville and 11-floor downtown general office building were icons. L&N's memorable nickname, "The Old Reliable," was in popular use by the last two decades of the 19th century (and continued, except for a period when "The Dixie Line"—

inherited in L&N's 1957 acquisition of Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis—was used instead).

The L&N wasn't immediately thought of as a coal road, but bituminous

was a major factor in the company's success. Its dining cars served up scrumptious Southern fare, ranging from country ham to seafood. A rather nondescript locomotive fleet included home-built engines and USRA designs with bulbous headlights and the road number painted on the lens—a company tradition observed even on some early diesels. Except for 42 M-1 ("Big Emma") 2-8-4's of the 1940's, L&N's roundhouses were devoid of Super Power. Dieselization was consummated

On L&N's Cumberland Valley Division in 1954, "Big Emma" 1984 brings an eastbound into Lynch, Ky.



JOHN A. KRAVE

By Ron Flanary

ed on January 28, 1957, when Mike 1882 steamed into history.

L&N's fame spread far beyond its territory, thanks in no small part to longtime *TRAINS* Magazine Editor David P. Morgan, who made no bones about it: the L&N held first place in his heart. As a youth in the Louisville suburbs along the road's double-track main to Cincinnati, Morgan soaked up L&N's big steam show during the late 1930's and the early war years. Later, his journalism credentials allowed him closer access during the transitional years of the late '40's and '50's.



L&N

Although my own L&N experience came a bit later, it was just as mesmerizing as Morgan's. L&N steam officially expired in January 1957, but I was old enough to remember Big Emmas in full stride, the bark of a J-4 Mike getting tonnage under way, and the three-note diminished 7th chord of an L&N passenger whistle. My infatuation with the Old Reliable led to a "museum," of sorts, in an extra room in my grandparents' railroad rooming house in Loyall, Ky. In 1961, L&N's long-time p.r. man Charlie Castner did a story on my collection of oilcans, marker lamps, and even large clinkers ("direct from the firebox of a J-4," I noted). The story appeared in a 1962 edition of *L&N Magazine*, the road's house organ. That lifelong friendship with Charlie also gave me access to a greater L&N "world" than the coal-hauling Cumberland Valley Division in my Appalachian home.

The following years brought more exposure to and appreciation for a great railroad: the lip-smacking experience of breakfast on the *Pan-American's* streamlined diner-lounge *Dixie Traveler* (is that a great car name, or what?); rides behind the restored Civil War-era 4-4-0 *General* in 1962; a seat at the throttle of E7 790 as it rolled with E6 772 through the trackwork of Cincinnati Union Terminal in 1966; the

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Fallen Flags Remember



FRANK G. TATNALL

Twenty-four-year-old E6's 775 and 772 rest on the servicing tracks at Louisville in October 1965.

sound of three F's working wide-open in the rain behind a coal train on the EK Sub's Elkatawa Hill; pacing, in my grandmother's well-used '56 Caddy, four gray-flanked U25B's north of Corbin on a "TOTE" (Trailer On Train Express) train; the thrill of visiting the opulent office of the company president (he was out at the time); the many visits to South Louisville Shops; or the smell of the morning dew from the rear vestibule of 6-6-4 sleeper *Yellow Pine* as the *Georgian* rolled through the northern part of its namesake state behind three fast-stepping E's. These were just a few of the vignettes that endeared the L&N to me.

Years later, with the 1983 founding of the Louisville & Nashville Historical Society, I would meet many more folks whose experiences were similar. Their own fascination with the Old Reliable was as widespread as its system map. Today, more than 1100 members share this common bond of affection for a railroad that, like far too many, is often remembered only for an embossed logo on a highway overpass or the memories of a retired employee.

What became of the L&N? South Louisville Shops was closed, and later razed. Today the site hosts the University of Louisville's football stadium. Downtown, the 11-story office building now belongs to the Commonwealth of Kentucky, although the huge neon "L&N" atop the its east side (installed in the mid-'50's) is still illuminated at night. The classic depots at both Louisville and Nashville still stand, adapted for uses as a transit system headquarters and hotel, respectively.

With some notable exceptions, most of L&N's key routes are either still



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operated by CSX or have been spun off to regional roads. The few that are gone include the western portion of the Evansville-St. Louis line, made redundant by CSX's ex-B&O line; the middle portion of the former Monon; a northern-Tennessee portion of the Memphis line (L&N cobbled half its route with half the NC&StL's); and the Lebanon Branch across east-central Kentucky.

Looking for a little of what the L&N was like in its heyday? I suggest a visit to the Kentucky Railway Museum at New Haven, Ky. There, one can still ride one of the railroad's oldest lines behind restored L&N Rogers-built Pacific 152, and aboard L&N heavy-weight passenger equipment. On special occasions, KRM even brings out L&N office car 363, and a diner serving genuine Old Reliable cuisine. A country ham breakfast or Gulf Coast seafood platter, with an occasional whiff of Kentucky coal smoke from 152's stack, is an intoxicating combination.

So, happy birthday, L&N, even if you're hiding behind a cover of CSX blue, gray, and yellow. Your admirers know you're still there—and still Reliable after all these years. ■

RON FLANARY, of Big Stone Gap, Va., has written numerous books and articles about the L&N.

L&N fact file

(comparative figures are for 1929 and 1982)

Route-miles: 5250; 10,396

Locomotives: 1350; 1086

Passenger cars: 1006; 113 (1970)

Freight cars: 64,134; 53,095

Headquarters city: Louisville, Ky.

Special interest group: Louisville & Nashville Historical Society, P.O. Box 17122, Louisville, KY 40217; www.rhhistorical.com/lnhs

Notable postwar passenger trains:

Georgian, Humming Bird, Pan-American, Crescent Limited, South Wind

Major merger acquisitions, 1930-1970:

Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis (1957);

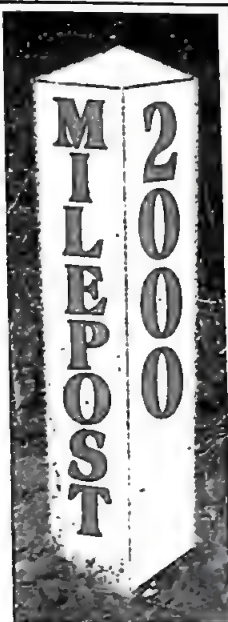
half of Chicago & Eastern Illinois (1969);

Monon (1971)

Source: *The Historical Guide to North American Railroads* (Kalmbach Books, 1999).

For more on the L&N, visit *Classic Trains* online at www.classictrainsmag.com.

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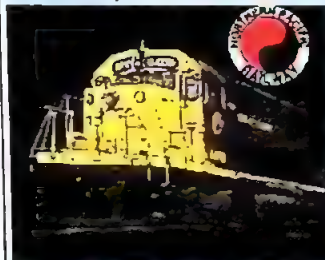


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A great time and place

J

UST EAST of Coatesville, Pa., at the U.S. Route 30 bridge spanning the Pennsylvania Railroad's Philadelphia-Harrisburg route, an M1 4-8-2 digs in with a west-bound freight in February 1948. The engine is working hard after a stop at the big coal wharf at Thorndale, a mile or so back. Located between junctions with low-grade freight lines at Thorndale and Parkesburg, this spot on the "Main Line" is busy with all types of trains. As at so many other places in this era, you'd see long-distance limiteds, heavy freights, all-stops locals, steam, electrics, and even shiny new diesels here. Not far away, doodlebugs and little steam engines ply bucolic branch lines. It's a great time, and place, to be a train-watcher.—*Robert S. McGonigal*

CURTIS C. QUAINANCE





Streamliners to the

When the upstart Seaboard boldly re-equipped its Florida trains, Coast Line quickly followed suit

By Joe Welsh

AS ONE OF THE WATERSHED EVENTS of the 20th century, the Great Depression forced individuals, corporations, and the nation to take steps they never would have taken in other times. The railroads were no exception. Beginning in 1929, the Depression would cut the railroads' annual passenger earnings in half by 1934. Generally, there were two reactions to this challenge. Conservative, financially secure railroads often hunkered down, cutting costs and studying their options while hoping to ride out the storm. Their less-stable rivals, needing to make significant progress just to stay afloat, often embraced wholesale change.

Nowhere was this difference more evident than in the Southeast. Here rivals Seaboard Air Line and Atlantic Coast Line, both operating between Richmond, Va., and Florida, had slugged it

out for the cream of the Florida tourist trade since the turn of the century. Both carriers' trains reached the Northeast via the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad from Richmond to Washington and the Pennsylvania Railroad from Washington to New York. The Seaboard went to Miami over its own line, hastily built on the eve of the Depression. ACL reached the east coast of Florida via the Florida East Coast Railway from Jacksonville to Miami. Both roads also had direct lines to points on Florida's west coast.

Seaboard's latecomer position was seen in its physical characteristics—a single track winding through the Piedmont, and a lightly ballasted line to Miami that avoided much of the populous east coast of Florida. ACL, by contrast, had a flat, well-maintained, double-track route on the coastal plain.

Physical plant wasn't their only difference. As the Depression set in, financially strapped Sea-

O. H. BORSUM PHOTO; PAUL LUBLINER COLLECTION



Sunshine State

board went into receivership in 1930. With characteristic Scotch thriftiness native to its North Carolina roots, the larger ACL maintained control of its own financial destiny. But as the '30's progressed, that conservative mindset nearly became its undoing—at least in the passenger business.

A new ballgame

Attracting passengers, not cutting costs, had become the name of the game as the 1930's progressed. That required new thinking and bold steps. Out west the Burlington Route, Union Pacific, and other railroads had done just that—introducing popular diesel-powered streamliners like the *Denver Zephyr* and the *City of Los Angeles*. The formidable Florida tourism industry, which was as interested in increasing trade as the railroads were, couldn't help but notice and began urging the ACL, SAL, and Florida East Coast to institute dramatic changes to their passenger service.

ACL resisted the idea. Picking up on the friction between local business leaders and the railroads, the press smelled a story. In March 1938, the *Miami Daily News* sent reporter Warren Smith off to Chicago and Denver for a look at the new lightweight streamliners traversing the



FEC PHOTO; JONATHAN NELSON COLLECTION

Midwest and to talk with the folks who ran them. In a series of four articles, Smith documented the positive experiences of the Rock Island, which had introduced its popular fleet of *Rockets* in 1937. He spoke with a Denver business leader who noted that his city was experiencing a boom, thanks in part to the fact that the *Denver Zephyr* had, in his mind, practically halved the travel time between Chicago and the Mile High City. Adding fuel to the fire, Smith quoted the happy businessman, "This shortening of distance [time]

Brightly colored diesels hauled the Florida streamliners in their early years. ACL E3 500 (above) strikes a pose with the *Champion* on the FEC near Lake Worth, Fla., in 1939. Seaboard E4's stand at Washington in 1940.





WILEY M. BRYAN

Coast Line's conservatism is exemplified by 4-8-4 1803 accelerating the heavyweight *Florida Special* south out of Richmond, Va. But even as this 1940 scene was occurring, Budd streamliners were changing ACL's outlook.

has opened up new possibilities of travel. Coming to Denver is now just a weekend trip. If you, too, had streamliners, Miami would be in a similar situation."

The *Daily News* scribe also wielded the pen to refute the claims of the conservative railroadmen that Florida was a "pick-up and distribution" state—a place with numerous stops and a location where the natural speed advantage of the streamliner would be lost. (Somehow, the railroaders had conveniently forgotten that, because of demographics and the nature of the trade, the Florida trains rolled almost nonstop between Richmond and Jacksonville.) Reporter Smith was ready for them here, too, quoting a Miamian who'd ridden the Burlington's crack *Denver Zephyr*, "I made that trip last year, and we stopped a dozen times before reaching Omaha; the first stop was only 30 miles out of Chicago. . . . That short-run argument won't hold water."

But Smith was his most persuasive in detailing the economics of lightweight, diesel-powered trains. He explained how diesels helped the Chicago-Des Moines *Rocket* complete a daily round trip while a steam-powered FEC local could only accomplish a one-way trip over the same distance. The articles also predicted that a diesel streamliner could cut the New York-to-Florida travel time by nearly 5 hours.

Coast Line remained unconvinced. In spring 1938 it took delivery of 12 state-of-the-art 4-8-4 steam locomotives from Baldwin. Their assignment was high-speed passenger service, but the



WILLIAM F. HOWES JR. COLLECTION

895,000-pound giants were less efficient than diesels and hard on track. In the same year, the railroad also purchased a series of new heavyweight coaches from Bethlehem Steel; at 78 tons, they were 27 tons heavier than contemporary lightweight cars. On December 15, 1938, ACL introduced the heavyweight, steam-powered *Vacationer*, an all-coach luxury train featuring reclining-seat coaches and air-conditioning with cars for both coasts of Florida.

Seaboard shows the way

Upstart Seaboard took a different path. First to introduce air-conditioning (in 1933), in 1936 it had added a small number of lightweight Pullman-built coaches and combines to its top trains. Intrigued by the cost efficiency of diesels and the attractiveness of streamliners, Seaboard listened closely when Rock Island, also in receivership, explained how the new trains had turned its passenger finances around. It was interested when it read that the Burlington's *Twin Zephyrs* grossed nearly \$1.2 million per year and retained nearly 65 percent of that as profit after expenses.

SAL's financial overseers were impressed, too. And when, after careful deliberation, the Seaboard asked the receivers, the security holders, and the courts to purchase diesel locomotives and a streamlined train, they were prepared to support the venture.

In fall 1938, SAL acquired nine Electro-Motive E4 passenger diesels in three A-B-A sets. The justification for the purchase was an expected reduc-



LOUIS A. MARRE COLLECTION

tion in operating expenses thanks to the efficiency of the diesels. Schedules were shortened, and the crack *Orange Blossom Special* began handling cars to Boston as a result of the speed-up. Attired in a striking "citrus" scheme of green, yellow, and orange, the flashy diesels were a world apart from the somber steamers running on the ACL. On October 12, 1938, Seaboard upped the ante, finalizing its order to Budd for a seven-car streamlined passenger train.



WILLIAM F. HOWES JR. COLL.

The natural model for the train was Santa Fe's five-car *El Capitan* coach streamliner, which had been operating between Chicago and Los Angeles since February 1938—and attracting significant ridership. Seaboard's new train, dubbed the *Silver Meteor*, would prove even more popular, exceeding the wildest hopes of the railroad. Within 48 hours of the announcement of the train's first trip, Seaboard received 2500 inquiries about travel on a train with a total capacity of 280 seats. Four trips were sold out two weeks before the inaugural run. On February 2, 1939, it was introduced on an every-third-day schedule from New York to Florida. The day before, the train was put on display in New York's Pennsylvania Station. More than 14,000 people visited the gleaming stainless-steel streamliner in less than 10 hours.

The *Silver Meteor* was so popular that Florida hotel employees even set up a ticket-scalping business, selling seats on the new train. One of the industry's principal goals in introducing streamliners was attracting new passengers to train travel. The *Meteor* succeeded admirably, drawing over 40 percent of its riders from other forms of transportation. Seaboard was back in business.

Atlantic Coast Line's attempts to woo passengers with its heavyweight *Vacationer* were completely overshadowed by the new *Silver Meteor*, and it hurt. For example: Because of the festivities on the day of the *Meteor*'s introduction, the PRR had parked the new train in Penn Station hours earlier than normal—and next to a train carrying ACL's heavyweight coaches for the *Vacationer*. Apparently, riders in ACL's conservative coaches got a good, long look at

In 1938, people lined up to tour Seaboard E4 3001, lettered for the *Orange Blossom Special*, its first assignment. Artwork by Bern Hill for a GM ad shows citrus-colored E7's amid orange groves.

the sparkling new celebrity across the platform, and they liked what they saw. Word got back to the Coast Line, and its infuriated Chairman Lyman Delano accused the Pennsy of deliberately parking the *Silver Meteor* next to his *Vacationer*. In point of fact, the whole thing had been an accident, but Delano's reaction underscored Coast Line's sensitivity to the competition. It had good reason to worry.

Early ridership information indicated that the *Meteor* was drawing a lot more than just attention. A comparison of passenger revenues for the two railroads for a two-month period before and after the introduction of the *Silver Meteor* shows clearly that Coast Line was in trouble.

Seaboard Air Line	JUNE	JULY
1938	\$278,766	\$266,571
1939	\$385,412	\$393,918
Increase	\$106,646	\$127,347

Atlantic Coast Line	JUNE	JULY
1938	\$336,193	\$347,147
1939	\$312,600	\$327,992
Decrease	-\$23,593	-\$19,155



FEC PHOTO; SETH BRAMSON COLLECTION

A well-positioned palm frond accents a publicity view of FEC E3 1002 with the road's seven-car *Champion* set. Taking a swipe at the Seaboard, an ACL ad touted the *Champion's* double-track route.

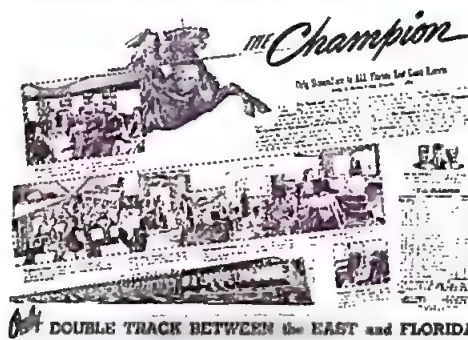
It's unlikely that ACL had access to Seaboard's earnings figures, but it had a handle on its own—and they were shrinking. It had only to look across the platform in Penn Station to see where those dollars were going.

Despite the Coast Line's conservatism, the reversal in earnings got the larger railroad's attention in a hurry.

In June 1939 the ACL and partner Florida East Coast ordered a trio of seven-car streamlined trainsets (two for ACL and one for FEC) from Budd. Like the *Silver Meteor*, they were constructed of stainless steel and were coach trains. The multiple-train order was designed to get a leg up on Seaboard by offering daily service to Miami. Pulled by Electro-Motive E3 and E6 diesels attired in ACL's striking purple livery or FEC's attractive orange and red, the new *Champions* were also an immediate success. Neither railroad would ever look back.

In response to demand and competition, in 1939 the *Silver Meteor* expanded to operate daily to Miami and every third day to St. Petersburg. In 1940 Seaboard doubled the size of the *Meteor* to 14 cars and began daily operation to St. Petersburg. In 1941 the train began handling sleeping cars. The *Champion* grew too. Keeping pace with Seaboard, in 1940 the ACL speedster also expanded to 14 cars and in 1941 added sleepers. ACL added diesels to its other Florida trains as well.

The new trains revolutionized travel to Florida far beyond the expectations of the chambers of commerce. Among the most vexing characteris-



JOE WELSH COLLECTION

tics of Florida tourism (for both hotels and the railroads) had been its heavy winter-season slant. The streamliners changed that. The new emphasis on affordable, luxury coach travel, coupled with the hotel industry's accent on traveling to Florida in summer, when prices were lower, created a market where none had existed before.

Thanks also to the advent of air-conditioning, Florida became affordable and attractive year-round to people of all economic means.

When war came in December 1941, the demand for travel increased exponentially. The fast, high-capacity trains were just what the doctor ordered. In 1944, its highest year of earnings, the combined east- and west-coast sections of the *Silver Meteor* grossed \$11 million in revenues and netted \$8 million. That amount was about equal to the deficit the entire Seaboard Air Line had experienced in 1934. Statistics for the *Champion*, although not readily available, undoubtedly read the same. The Florida streamliners were some of the most profitable trains in the country.

Postwar prosperity

After World War II, the Seaboard, Atlantic Coast Line, and partners invested heavily to refurbish their trains. The purchase included the first lightweight sleeping cars for the Florida trains. Trains re-equipped included the *East Coast Champion* and the *West Coast Champion* (a west coast section of the *Champion* that had been created in the early 1940's). ACL's famous winter-only *Florida*



DAVID SALTER



SAL PHOTO; JOE WELSH COLLECTION



JOE WELSH COLLECTION

As other trains faltered, the Florida streamliners remained popular; here, three SAL E7's back a long *Silver Meteor* into Jacksonville Terminal in 1965.

Passengers enjoy rotating reclining seats on the '39 *Meteor* (far left). The '39 *Champ's* obs-lounge car offered luxurious accommodations at a low fare.

Special was also streamlined for the first time, in 1949. The move killed off the great *Orange Blossom Special*, Seaboard's competing heavyweight train, in 1953—once again proving that the streamliner was a powerful marketing tool. The *Silver Meteor* was also re-equipped and would become the Seaboard's premier train.

Other railroads suffered heavily at the hands of the airlines and the new Interstate highway system, but the Florida trains remained popular and at least marginally profitable through the 1950's and into the early '60's. The magnetic draw of sunny Florida, the size of the market, the near-perfect schedule (just overnight) and the lack of good roads (I-95 wasn't complete) all helped. The attitudes of Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line toward the passenger certainly didn't hurt.

In 1955-56, a time when the Pennsylvania Railroad, Southern Pacific, and other giants who'd been in the passenger business for 100 years or more were concluding that the passenger train was a losing proposition, Seaboard purchased

some of the last long-distance cars built in the pre-Amtrak era.

Atlantic Coast Line also doted on its passenger trains. In the early 1960's, the railroad built new stations, and offered package vacations and new on-board amenities. The *Florida Special* became a showpiece train for its 75th anniversary season in 1962-63 (a year after the PRR had begun quiet efforts to discontinue its flagship *Broadway Limited*). The *Special* offered refurbished equipment and a wide range of passenger diversions in a "recreation car," including fashion shows, sing-alongs, games, and other amenities. All of this captured the attention of the public and the national press, and the *Special* was even featured on TV's *Today Show*.

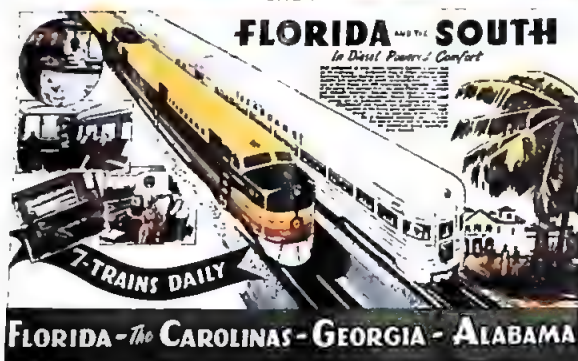
It wasn't all sunny skies, though. In January 1963, the Florida East Coast was struck as a result of its unwillingness to abide by a national labor agreement. The resulting labor unrest was tinged with numerous acts of violence—including the dynamiting of moving trains. FEC was no longer

Seaboard's Sun Lounge sleepers of 1956 featured roof-top windows over the lounge area, and were among the last sleepers built until Amtrak's Superliners. An SAL brochure played up the road's diesels and Budd rolling stock.

In the early 1960's, the ACL-FEC *Florida Special* (below right) was famous for on-board activities such as sing-alongs in the Recreation Car.



SAL PHOTO: JOE WELSH COLLECTION



JOE WELSH COLLECTION

a safe place for passengers. Suddenly, Coast Line found itself cut off from access to much of the populous east coast of Florida. In an arrangement that presaged the two companies' merger (then under discussion), Coast Line entered into an agreement with Seaboard to use SAL's rails and station to access Miami. The result would be a decline in Coast Line's revenues in 1964. By now the *Champions*, which had run as separate consists to the east and west coasts, would often be consolidated in the spring and fall. In 1965 the Post Office Department began operating the Zip Code distribution system using trucks, not the railroads, and head-end revenue which had helped meet the bottom line began disappearing from the Florida trains.

But ACL and SAL didn't give up. The Coast Line introduced "new" sleeping-car accommodations in 1965 in the form of the "Budget Room Coach," which offered a full-sized roomette to passengers at a cost of only \$15 over coach fare. Dome sleeping cars appeared on the *Florida Special* south of Richmond in the 1965-66 season, as did a popular Candlelight Dinner. Seaboard revenues increased in 1965 and '66. SAL bought nearly the entire FEC streamlined car fleet in 1965, giving it a significantly enhanced roster at a bargain rate. The exception was sleeping cars, for which SAL had no additional need. Coach travel had become the heart of the business. But relatively speaking, the Florida trains still carried a lot of first-class passengers—a throwback to the days when hundreds of Pullman pool cars used to carry people to the Sunshine State in winter. In 1966, for example, the *Silver Meteor* and ACL's *Florida Special* routinely carried more sleeping cars than the New York Central's *20th Century*



ACL PHOTO: JOE WELSH COLLECTION

Limited or the Santa Fe's renowned *Super Chief*. Eighteen-car Florida streamliners were the norm. At holiday times, extra sections abounded.

The last pro-passenger railroad

This was the situation that Seaboard Coast Line inherited upon its creation in the July 1967 merger of SAL and ACL. The new company was the last truly pro-passenger railroad in America, and it could afford to be—the passengers hadn't abandoned the service. SCL did reorganize its fleet to save money, however. The most notable



WILLIAM T. MORGAN

change was the elimination of the *East Coast Champion* in 1968. The *Silver Meteor* was the premier train to Miami, while the *West Coast Champion*—now renamed the *Champion*—was the top train to the west coast of Florida. SCL retained the seasonal *Florida Special* to Miami. It also kept the *Silver Meteor*'s kid brother, the *Silver Star*, which served both coasts of Florida.

That's right, in 1968, a time when great passenger trains were dropping like flies, SCL was operating three daily streamliners from New York to Florida, a seasonal luxury train, a number of secondary trains, and dozens of sleeping cars, diners, and specialty cars. And that was after it had taken post-merger steps to tighten up its passenger operations. Imagine SCL's horror when, in spring 1968, Penn Central (formed from the merger of the PRR and NYC in February '68) announced to its connecting railroads that it would no longer handle Pullman-operated cars at New York's Sunnyside Yard, which SCL's fleet used as its northern terminus. The previous year Pennsy had terminated its relationship with Pullman for the operation of sleeping cars on its east-west fleet. Now the new railroad wanted out of any relationship with the ailing sleeping-car company. SCL convinced PC to continue the practice. But with Pullman's demise, the railroads took over the operation of sleeping cars on January 1, 1969, and Pullman maintenance and pool distribution ended on August 1, 1969.

When Pullman quit, SCL had to staff the sleeping cars itself and find a clever way to manage the fleet. It did, selling the cars to Hamburg Industries and leasing them back. Then SCL did something else amazing: it arranged for the purchase of more sleeping cars from Chesapeake &

Ohio/Baltimore & Ohio, adding dome sleepers and premium room accommodations to its fleet. There wasn't another railroad in the United States buying sleeping cars in 1969. SCL even fought successfully with Penn Central to keep the *Florida Special* when the northern carrier made noises about not renewing the seasonal service in 1970.

Eventually the numbers caught up with SCL, though, and, for once, all that passenger demand worked against it. Despite having by now incurred some significant losses in the passenger business, the railroad had been unwilling to abandon its passengers. But when SCL looked at the long-term costs versus the revenues, especially the high capital cost of replacing its large, aging fleet, it reluctantly decided to join the National Railroad Passenger Corporation—Amtrak—in 1971. The national carrier had been created by the federal government to bail out railroads desperate to get out from under the passenger burden.

But the market never died. Today, 60 years after the *Silver Meteor* was inaugurated, Amtrak long-distance rail routes typically host a single daily train. The New York-Florida route boasts three, including a *Silver Meteor*. A fourth—the *Auto Train* from Virginia to Florida, which builds on a technology tested on the Atlantic Coast Line in 1966—is one of Amtrak's top money-earners. If *Miami Daily News* reporter Warren Smith were still around, he'd probably find a classy way to say, "I told you so." ■

JOE WELSH lives in Auburn, Wash. He is a regular contributor to *TRAINS Magazine* and is the author of four books on railroads including *By Streamliner*, *New York to Florida* (Andover Junction Publications, 1994).

Still going strong under Seaboard Coast Line auspices, a southbound 17-car *Silver Meteor* sweeps around a curve near Sebring, Fla., on March 30, 1970.

When elan rode the Traction

A routine day on the Illinois Terminal took a turn for the dramatic

By Gordon E. Lloyd • Photos by the author

THE REASON WE ARE TROLLEY- OR TRAIN-WATCHERS is the element of serendipity, or finding agreeable things not sought out. When one goes trackside to see railroad action, with camera or without, it's always with the hope that something unusual will turn up, is it not? This is because railroading is a complex and diverse business, with varied motive power and train consists, plus the possibility of unusual operations owing to accidents, weather interference, or other unexpected occurrences.

As a traction fan, one delight for me in the late 1940's and early 1950's was the opportunity to ride and photograph the Illinois Terminal Railroad. "The IT"—or "the Traction" as many called it for a predecessor, Illinois Traction System—was your consummate electric interurban system, totaling almost 500 route-miles in its pre-Depression heyday. The system remained basically intact even after World War II, operating passenger service into the 1950's on its main lines from St. Louis, Mo., to Peoria; from Springfield east to Danville, Ill.; on a Peoria to Bloomington to Decatur line; and on a branch north of St. Louis to Alton, Ill. Not until 1956 would IT's intercity passenger service end; its St. Louis suburban trolleys lasted until 1958, and its healthy freight service would help the road survive through the 1970's.

In the early 1950's, I lived in the Chicago area. The three "Insull interurbans" (bought and modernized by mogul Samuel Insull) were close at hand: Chicago, Aurora & Elgin; Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee; and Chicago South Shore & South Bend. The lure for me and my friends, however, was downstate on the Illinois Terminal. In those days of relatively cheap train travel, day trips to see and ride the

Traction were pleasant outings and easy to do. We could hop on the GM&O's *Alton Limited* at Chicago Union Station and be in Bloomington at 10:41 a.m., which allowed time for shooting GM&O action or whatever was happening on the Peoria & Eastern or the Nickel Plate, plus a ride to Decatur and back on the IT. We would return to the Windy City on the *Ann Rutledge*, arriving back at 9:40

p.m. after a good dinner on board.

Another option was to take the Illinois Central from Central Station to Champaign. An 8 a.m. departure on the *City of New Orleans* would get you to Champaign by 9:45, in plenty of time to allow a ride on IT train 72 east to Danville, then back on 75 to Champaign with a 2:30 p.m. arrival. Or, you could continue on to Springfield, a 5 p.m. arrival, which would allow a return to Chicago on either the *Ann Rutledge* or IC's *Daylight*. Yet another option I contemplated, but never did, was to take the Chicago & Eastern Illinois from Chicago to Danville and then IT 75 over to Springfield.

Most Americans were acquiring automobiles by 1950, with unhappy consequences for railroad passenger travel. Illinois Terminal re-evaluated its service and determined what in retrospect was the obvious—electric rail passen-



GEORGE KRAMBLES



Six years before his memorable ride from Champaign to Decatur, on July 8, 1947, the author found cars 271 and 1201 at IT's Decatur depot. After loading, 271 will leave at 4:55 p.m. to continue its Danville-Springfield run as train 77. After counterpart 76 comes and goes at 5:13, car 1201 at 5:15 will head back for Bloomington and Peoria as train 44.



ger service in thinly settled rural areas had little potential of producing profit. After due deliberation, IT made drastic cuts in passenger operations. In 1952, its Springfield-Danville line was cut back to Ogden, Ill., and to Champaign the following year. The "old main line" through Bloomington was also abandoned in 1953 from Mackinaw Junction, east of Peoria, to Forsyth, just north of Decatur. Passenger service

on the Springfield-Champaign route was cut to three round trips a day, which curtailed our railfan "joy rides."

Thus on a fine fall Saturday in 1953, October 17, did a friend, Don Idarius, and I make what would be a memorable day-trip down to the IT. This time, we drove, enabling us to make a Decatur-Champaign round trip on the Traction and get back to Chicago the same day. After parking at the Decatur

station, we took IT 62 to Champaign, arriving at 1:25 p.m. Our return was to be on train 63, scheduled to leave at 2 p.m. with arrival in Decatur at 3:20.

Now, serendipity entered the scene. The IT conductor, long familiar with the railfan fraternity, told us during the layover that we would be departing Champaign a bit late because the Illinois Central had a special train that would delay our departure. It was a



Serendipity of the first order occurs in Champaign on October 17, 1953, as an Illinois Central football special, in getting turned around to head north, first heads west on the Peoria & Eastern (above), then backs up on joint Wabash-IT track (left), passing the blue IT interurban car ready to leave for Decatur.

departure (the line was single track west of the Wabash-IT station). He said that as soon as the IC train cleared, the interurban would leave for Springfield.

Upon hearing this news, of course, Don and I promptly walked over to the P&E. After a 10-minute wait, about 2:15, we saw a headlight and the brown-and-orange nose of an IC E7 diesel. We shot photos as the special rolled by the P&E station, then dashed across the tracks to shoot it backing down the Wabash-IT. It was a perhaps unique photo of an IC passenger train right alongside an Illinois Terminal interurban.

As if this were not enough, we then experienced a once-in-a-lifetime interurban ride. "Elan" is defined as "vigorous spirit or enthusiasm," and the venerable Illinois Terminal certainly exhibited that on this trip. We left Champaign at 2:25 p.m., 25 minutes late, and riding up front on an interurban had never been so exciting, even on the North Shore's fast Skokie Valley route. The IT motorman seemed to never take the controller out of the last notch even as we hit sharp curves and opposing turnouts. We probably never got above 65 mph, but it seemed

like we were going 80! We blasted through the little towns: Bondville and Seymour and White Heath. It was only as we approached Monticello, with its street-running and its station on a sharp curve, that the brakeshoes of car 285 clapped the wheels and we came to a stop to pick up passengers.

The final 30 miles were again full of

jolts and the rapid nosing motion of an electric car in full flight. Line poles flashed by like pickets on a fence, and the air horn was in constant use. It was an exciting and amazing trip. The motorman had shown the elan and audacity of a cavalryman. We arrived in Decatur only 10 minutes off the timcard, indeed remarkable since the IT scheduled its trains very tightly and to run fast.

That wonderful October day became one where serendipity was played out in full, the stuff of great memories. **L**



football special from Chicago for the day's University of Illinois game, and the train had to be turned for the return trip. The move involved coming off the IC, going west on NYC's Peoria & Eastern, crossing over to the parallel Wabash track which IT shared through town, and then backing up for a reverse move onto the IC. The conductor added a note of concern, because this movement would block the IT's westbound

GORDON E. LLOYD, a noted traction fan, photographer, and writer, is the author of *Illinois Terminal in Color*, Volume I, published in 1998 by Morning Sun Books.

Stan Kistler's L.A.

One of the West's top photographers looks back on the 1940's and '50's in Southern California

By Stan Kistler • Photos by the author

WHEN YOU COMPILE the major rail hubs in the United States in the steam-to-diesel transition period, Los Angeles has to be high on the list. It may not have had as many Class 1 railroads as, say, St. Louis or Chicago, but the sheer volume of freight and passenger traffic originating and terminating there during the post-war years was phenomenal.

I was privileged to be a railfan and a spectator to this era of Southern California rail history. Born and raised in Pasadena, with short stints in San Diego and Long Beach in my first 20 years, I roamed the railroad scene as much as I could with only public transportation and the limited income of a teenager from a middle-class family.



Santa Fe's first *San Diegan* of the day leaves LAUPT on a cold January 1948 morning. Mountain-type 3743 is pinch-hitting for train 72's usual EMC E1 diesels, which are in the shop for their monthly inspection.





The hub: Mission Tower

In 1945, just after V-J Day ended the Second World War, I often spent my Sunday afternoons riding the Pacific Electric Oak Knoll Line or Short Line from Pasadena to downtown Los Angeles in one of the comfortable 1100-class interurban cars. I would alight at the foot of the Aliso Street bridge, walk back to the Santa Fe Railway right-of-way along the Los Angeles River, and hike about a half-mile to Mission Tower. Here, at the gateway to Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, I could be entertained for hours with the parade of passenger, freight, and switching movements of the Southern Pacific, Union Pacific, and Santa Fe. All this for the princely sum of 50 cents—40 cents for the PE round trip, and a dime for bus fare between the PE and my home!

Railfans were not so numerous in the late 1940's, and I rarely saw another person beside the tracks. The operators began to notice my visits, and invited me up into the tower one Sunday. Three operators manned the 195-lever interlocking machine. I was astounded at the hubbub of activity—trains calling for routes with whistle signals from remote microphone locations, constant voice communication with Terminal Tower at the station throat, phones ringing, relays clicking, and interlocking levers being pulled and pushed.

It was also a great vantage point for train-watching and photography. There was a constant stream of SP passenger trains, all steam-powered by an assortment of 4-8-2's, 4-8-4's, and cab-forward 4-8-8-2's. Well-kept 0-6-0's moved trains to and from the coachyard across the Los Angeles River, where freights on the lines to Yuma, Ariz. (on the Sunset and Golden State routes), and Los Angeles harbor also could be seen.

UP's presence was the smallest of the three railroads, with only six daily passenger trains, usually powered by 4-8-2's bearing the initials of subsidiary Los Angeles & Salt Lake on the rear of their tenders. The 10-times-a-month diesel-powered *City of Los Angeles*, and only an occasional transfer move of freight on the east bank of the river, made up the rest of the UP action.

At the time, Santa Fe fielded 24 daily scheduled trains, plus numerous extra sections. These were all steam-powered, except for the *San Diegos* and the twice-weekly *El Capitan* and *Super Chief*, which rated Electro-Motive E1, E3, and E6 diesels. There were plenty of switching moves to and from the coachyard; these were handled, for the most part, by hefty 0-8-0's. Once in a while an Alco HH1000 diesel would appear, and transfer jobs to and from the SP would often be seen with a 2-8-0 or 2-8-2.

All in all, Mission Tower was *the* place to be for an L.A. train-watcher in the postwar period.

Ranging around L.A.

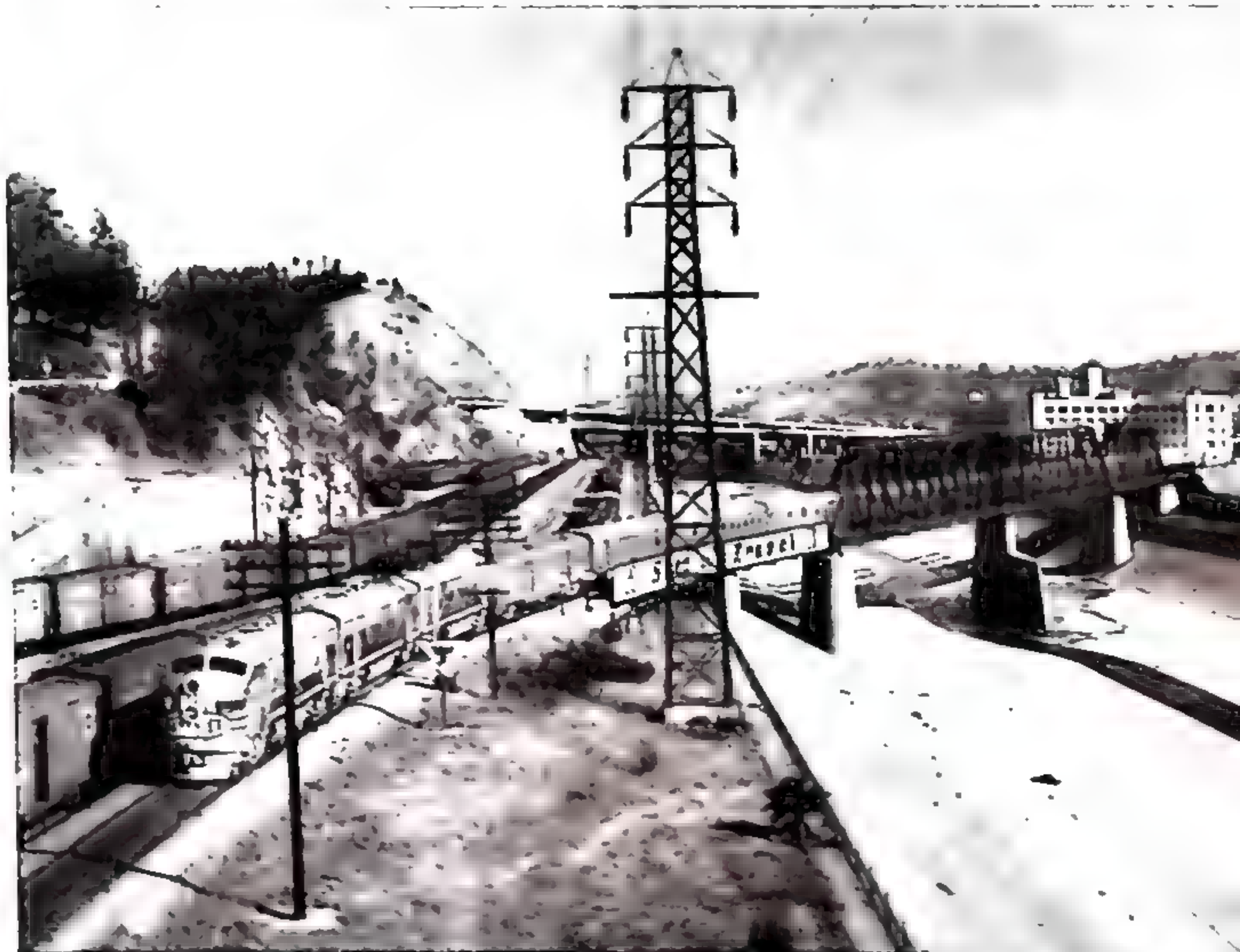
It was late 1951 before I had a car of my own, having put my priorities on the purchase of a professional "Speed Graphic" camera in 1949. This camera made 4x5-inch negatives and was a great improvement over the "Six-20" roll-film cameras I had started out with. Public transportation still





Towerman Eber Kelly works his center position on the huge 195-lever interlocking machine at Mission Tower in June 1947. Three shifts of three towermen regularly manned this tower around the clock in the busy postwar years.

Union Pacific's L.A. steam passenger operations were winding down in May 1947 when LA&SL 4-6-2 3179 on the second section of train 2, the *Los Angeles Limited*, approached Mission Tower with a trainload of Shriners bound for Las Vegas. The 3179 is shiny in black and two-tone gray paint, UP's standard for steam passenger power at the time.



The *Super Chief*, flagship of Santa Fe's transcontinental fleet, is minutes away from an on-time arrival at Union Station as it crosses a nearly dry Los Angeles River on a blustery March 1953 morning. SP tracks line both sides of the river here, and Santa Fe has decorated part of its bridge (since removed as part of the Pasadena light-rail project) with a billboard visible to passengers riding SP trains on the east bank.

got me to most places I wanted to go, and an occasional offer of a ride with other local railfans who had cars gave me access to the famed reaches of Cajon, Soledad Canyon, Tehachapi, and other nearby scenic railroad routes. Southern California's three big railroads were rapidly phasing out steam power, and I was determined to photographically record as much as I could.

UP had completed dieselization into Los Angeles by 1948 except for a couple of 0-6-0's leased to the Harbor Belt Line at Wilmington. For some reason, possibly the lower volume of traffic and the absence of mainline steam locomotives, I rarely trained my cameras on the UP. I did get some shots of the UP at Union Station, Colton, and San Bernardino, places I visited mainly to catch steam on the other roads.

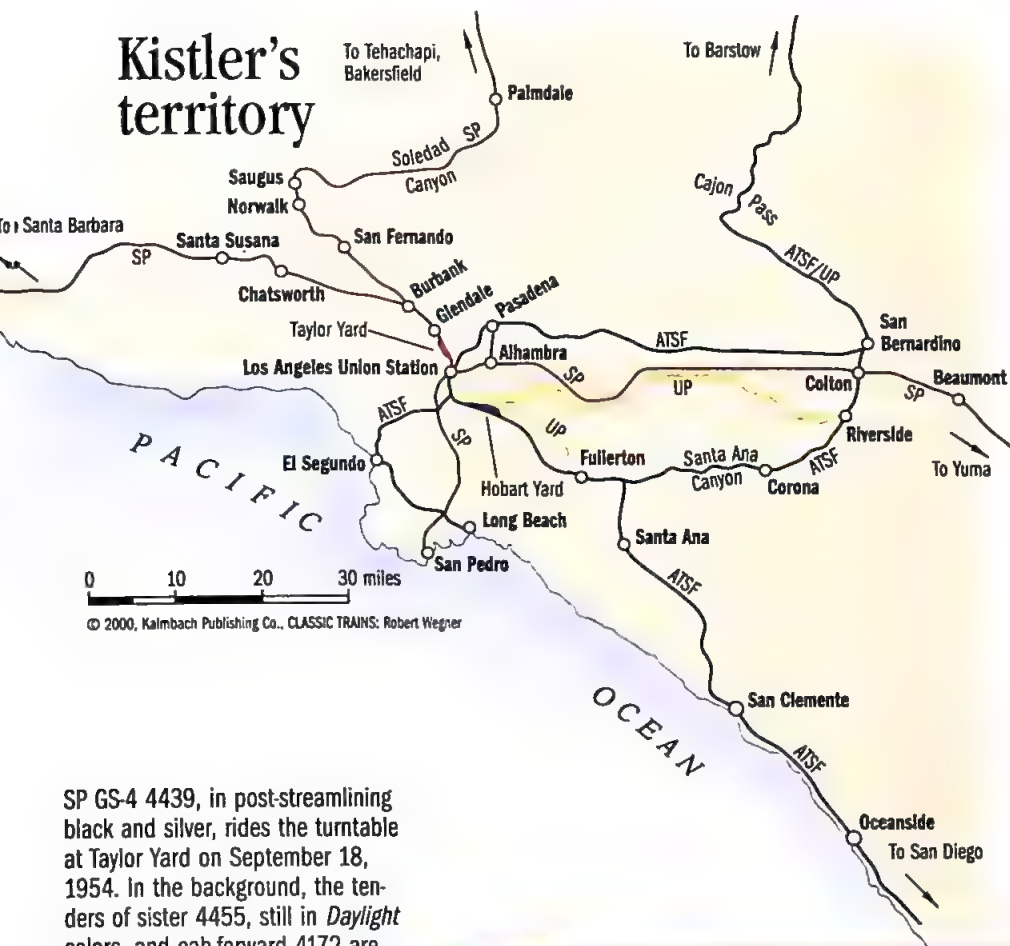
The Pacific Electric was also a major player in the Los Angeles area, in both passenger and freight operations. But at the end of the 1940's, PE's interurban network was shrinking rapidly, particularly in the northern and eastern sections of the L.A. Basin. Freight business, however, was booming, and as the originating carrier for long-haul shipments, PE's revenues brought substantial profits from the freight-rate split in effect at that time. There were still many citrus groves all over the basin, and PE lines served a multitude of packing houses. PE served the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, as well as the oil refineries around El Segundo, and as the Korean War escalated after mid-1950, the PE was there to haul military supplies to the ports. Steeple-cab electric freight locomotives and leased diesel switchers from parent Southern Pacific made up the motive-power fleet, which even included a couple of former Northwestern Pacific gas-electric cars on isolated, non-electrified lines. As I think back, I wish I had given more attention to the PE with my camera. But money was hard to come by for me then, and what film I could afford was exposed on the steam roads. At least I can say I rode and observed the Pacific Electric at one of its busiest times.

Santa Fe photo opportunities abounded in my own front yard in Pasadena between 1946 and '48, when our home was less than 100 yards from the L.A.-San Bernardino main line in the Lamanda Park area. Steam was still king in those years, with doubleheaders not uncommon on the *California Limited*, *Fast Mail*, and *Scout* eastbound because of the 2.2 percent grade from Los Angeles to midway through Pasadena. Unfortunately, all these were night trains, and not easily photographed. Westbounds in the morning were another matter, and I often trained my lens on anything that was pulled by steam. The big 4-8-4's, as well as 4-8-2's, held forth on most of the passenger trains. The local freights rated 2-8-0's and 2-8-2's, and once in a while a drag freight would come through with a 2-10-2.

By 1951 Santa Fe was about 65 percent diesel in both passenger and freight service into Los Angeles. Extra sections of passenger trains still were almost all steam-powered, as were local mail trains between L.A. and San Bernardino. Some



Kistler's territory



SP GS-4 4439, in post-streamlining black and silver, rides the turntable at Taylor Yard on September 18, 1954. In the background, the tenders of sister 4455, still in *Daylight* colors, and cab-forward 4172 are visible protruding from roundhouse stalls. This photo is from Kistler's first roll of Kodachrome film.



In another September 18, 1954, photo, a profusion of rolling stock is on view in Taylor Yard, SP's primary freight classification facility in L.A. We're looking south from a foot-bridge spanning the yard from San Fernando Road to the PFE shops and SP roundhouse by the river. Today, the main shops and yard of commuter carrier Metrolink are here.

In the Watts section of L.A., two EMD switchers—dynamic-brake-equipped SW8 4606 and SW1 1013—roll a freight down the famous four-track main line of SP subsidiary Pacific Electric. Three years after this August 1958 scene, the line became freight-only when the Metropolitan Transit Authority stilled PE's "Big Red Cars."

branchline freights that required their locomotives to be kept overnight at remote junctions such as Corona, Santa Ana, or Oceanside remained steam-hauled for a little longer than mainline locals; the latter were better able to utilize the new GP7 road-switchers arriving from EMD in droves. Manifest freights west of San Bernardino via Riverside and Fullerton were pulled either by 3800-class 2-10-2's or two-unit FT diesels. The Santa Ana River canyon west of Corona made for some scenic locations, and there was usually plenty of traffic to warrant an occasional trip down there. The Surf Line to San Diego diverged at Fullerton. It handled four daily *San Diegan* round trips until 1952, when a pair of Budd RDC's joined the service and added two more round trips. Surf Line freights were generally handled by 2-8-2's and 2-10-2's up until the 1950's, when GP7's and FT's replaced them.

On my numerous trips to Cajon Pass or SP's Beaumont Hill in the early 1950's, I always tried to catch some action at Colton, where the Santa Fe and UP crossed SP's Yuma main line. The crossing was controlled from an interlocking tower with "armstrong" levers and hundreds of yards of connecting rods to the switches, derails, and signals. There was plenty of activity here on all three roads, especially the SP, which had a roundhouse as well as a Pacific Fruit Express icing dock at Colton. SP based several types of steam engines here, including small 2-6-0's, 2-8-0's, and 4-6-0's for locals. Helpers were added for the climb to the top of the eastbound grade at Beaumont, and for a long time 2-10-2's and the big three-cylinder 4-10-2's held these assignments on freights, with 4-8-2's helping most of the passenger trains. Yard switching most often rated 2-8-0's.

SP had diesels on the *Golden State* and *Sunset*, but Coast and San Joaquin passenger trains and most freights still were predominantly steam, as were many branchline freights, and most of the switchers at the huge Taylor yard in Los Angeles. Glendale and north along San Fernando Road were great places for train-watching and photography, particularly when the passenger trains would accelerate from their station stops. Burbank Junction, where the Coast and Valley lines split, had its attraction to many fans of the period. Dick Steinheimer in particular made some impressive photos here, but it was a spot I seldom visited.

SP's Coast Line played host to the famous *Daylights* as well as the all-Pullman *Lark* and a daily "maid of all work," trains 71 and 72 that handled more milk cans, mail, and express than passengers. My favorite photo spots for these trains, and the numerous freights that moved this way, was up in the rocky area between Chatsworth and Santa Susana. It took some hiking to get to these places, but the results made it worth the effort.

SP's San Joaquin Division started at Burbank Junction and ran northwesterly toward Newhall and Saugus, where it turned east into Soledad Canyon. My first exposure to the scenic attractions of the area between here and Palmdale was courtesy of the late Frank J. Peterson, a photographer I first met in 1947. Frank had been making





Below: Santa Fe's LA-San Bernardino (via Fullerton) daily local 54 passes First Street Yard in L.A., complete with an Alco HH1000 on the ready tracks at right, on May 23, 1954. Bumped from the *San Diegans*, chair-observation car 3245 brings up the rear of the train, which is powered by GP7 2651. It's Sunday, so the RPO is absent from the consist.



Near Gypsum in the Horseshoe Bend area of the Santa Ana River canyon, a westbound Santa Fe freight heads for Fullerton and its final destination at L.A.'s Hobart Yard. Two-unit FT No. 170 wears the short-lived all-blue with yellow "cigar-band" nose emblem in this December 1951 photo.

In 1953, citrus packing houses still abounded along the Santa Fe's line along the foothills in the San Gabriel valley. Here, two-year-old Fairbanks-Morse H16-44 3003 on the eastward "Second District Local" switches the Lamanda Park Citrus Association at the eastern edge of Pasadena. The FM's were tried in all classes of freight service in L.A. when new, but were sent east when enough EMD GP7's were available for California.

On December 10, 1950, FM Erie-built No. 700 and two sister Eries lead a late-running Union Pacific train 3, the *Utahn*, past a westbound UP freight powered by F3 1408 at Santa Fe's West Yard Tower in San Bernardino. The white flags on No. 1408 are in deference to Santa Fe operating rules on the joint track between Daggett and Riverside Junction.

train pictures in the area since the 1930's, and showed me most of his favorite spots. There were numerous tunnels, cuts, fills, and "S" curves, as well as rocky cliff backgrounds in the Soledad Canyon, all making for interesting and varied composition. Luckily, many of the locations did not require long hikes.

Here the *San Joaquin Daylight*, *Owl*, *West Coast*, and *Tehachapi* entered and left the L.A. Basin on their runs to and from Northern California via the Tehachapi mountains. The *San Joaquin Daylight* regularly was handled by doubleheaded 4-8-2's, or a 4-8-2 and a GS-class 4-8-4. On occasion, a cab-forward 4-8-8-2 would be substituted. The *Owl*, a night train with a heavy consist, usually was pulled by two cab-forwards. What a sight! The *Tehachapi*, trains 55 and 56, was a slow mail-and-express train that made all local stops, and rated a cab-forward between Los Angeles and Bakersfield. Until the coming of the F3 and F7 freight diesels in the early 1950's, the freights through this area were almost always handled by two cab-forwards, one on the point and one ahead of the caboose.

The end of L.A. steam

In early 1956, Southern Pacific completed its steam-to-diesel transition in the Los Angeles Basin. On February 19, an excursion sponsored by the Southern California Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society ran to Indio and back with GS-4 4436. On April 22, two Consolidations, 2582 and 2818, were pulled out of storage, fired up, and run light to Bakersfield, ending the era of steam locomotion for all practical purposes.

Santa Fe's last L.A. steam operation was the Railway Club of Southern California's "Farewell to Steam" excursion to Barstow and return with 4-8-4 3759 on February 6, 1955. Four of the 3751-class 4-8-4's remained in storage in L.A. for a few more years until 3758 and 3760 went to scrappers in late 1956, and 3759 was donated to the city of Kingman, Ariz., in May 1957. The last to go was 3751, donated to San Bernardino in June 1958. Years later, this engine was the subject of a massive restoration job undertaken by the San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society. No. 3751 has steamed on Santa Fe specials in 1991 and '92, and most recently ran over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe to Railfair '99 in Sacramento.

Watching 3751 perform flawlessly on the busy BNSF main line between Barstow and Northern California brought back fond memories of my youth in the Los Angeles Basin, when steam trains were still an everyday sight. Even the diesels that replaced them are now almost extinct, themselves succumbing to more-modern, high-tech motive power. It was an exciting period to be trackside. I was lucky to be there. ■

STAN KISTLER, 69, lives in Grass Valley, Calif. He is semi-retired from the industrial and graphic arts photography trade. His railroad photos have been widely published, and he was the recipient of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's Photography Award in 1996.





SP cab-forward 4221 (top) starts its train out of Colton Yard, heading for Los Angeles. In the left of the photo, 2-8-0 2547 does some switching, while at right, helper engines for Beaumont Hill wait on the ready tracks. Mogul 1822 is not a regular Beaumont helper, and will run through to Indio or Niland.



On a clear October morning in 1952, SP's Pasadena Branch local is returning to Alhambra, where the 4.8-mile spur joins the L.A.-Indio main. Ten-Wheeler 2355 cruises Pasadena Parkway near Glenarm Street with a couple of reefers behind its caboose to be set out further down the branch.

Four brand-new Alco PA's, led by the 6039, take SP's *San Joaquin Daylight*, bound for San Francisco from Los Angeles via Tehachapi Loop, past some imposing rock outcroppings in the Soledad Canyon at Ravenna on December 27, 1953.



Year-old Baldwin AS616 No. 5247 emerges from one of the tunnels in the Santa Susana-Chatsworth area of SP's Coast Line with a Los Angeles-bound freight. The date is July 27, 1952—six days after the big Tehachapi earthquake knocked out SP's San Joaquin Valley Line between Mojave and Bakersfield—and the Coast Line is bustling with rerouted traffic.

Night passage

By Vernon L. Smith



T

HE YEAR IS 1929. The locale, the iron country of northern Minnesota. The time is after midnight in late September. I am 18 years old and well into my second year as a locomotive fireman for the Virginia Ore Mining Co. Most high-school graduates will go to work in the various mines—I want to be a locomotive man and am fortunate, for after a brief hitch as a shop laborer, I am firing.

We have assigned engines, and mine is a large 0-6-0 with a very long firebox arranged above the frames but between the drive wheels. This locomotive has a relatively short space between the boiler head and the end of the engine frame. However, there is sufficient room

between the back wall of the cab and the boiler to slide around the backhead to reach the seatbox and from that position I have only a partial view of the engineer.

This particular night I do not have my regular engineman, and although I know the new man, I have never fired for him before. No problem—our task is to push short, but heavy, trains of iron ore from the bottom of the open pit up to the surface and deliver the loaded cars to our Mahnomen Lake Yard. The brakeman rides on top of the head car.

The yard is on a long strip of land, with water on each side of it, and the mining company motive power works the north end of the yard setting loads in the eastern tracks and drawing out empties for loading from the western tracks. The center track is part of the main line which extends northeasterly to serve other mines and mining towns.

Our line to the pit and coal dock diverts from this main. The Soo Line or Northern Pacific crews normally work the yard from the south end by filling the west tracks with empties and pulling out the loads from the eastern tracks.

There are no lights in this yard, so it can be completely dark at night except for the locomotive headlights and the brakemen's lanterns. At times the yard is very busy with activity at both ends.

Most trips out of the pit are routine, and about three round trips can be accomplished in our 12-hour shift. We load a number of 50- or 75-ton-capacity ore cars at one of the steam shovels and then push them up the very long grade out of the mine. This incline starts out at 5 percent and increases to 5½ percent about halfway up; at that point there is a short siding where we usually meet one of the other engines, with empties, waiting to go down. When the rail is dry, we will not slip and stall with the heavy loads as some-



"Yet man
is born to
trouble

as the sparks
fly upward."

VERNON L. SMITH

times occurs in bad weather.

Tonight this trip, like others, demands all my skill and energy as a fireman. Firing is continuous as the engine pounds along in the night, at about 6 or 7 mph on the steep grade, the sound of the exhaust reverberating off the pit walls. The chain-operated firedoor must be swung open and closed between each shovelful of coal, not only to protect the tubes from leakage but to protect myself, as the heat from the open firedoor is terrific—the left side of my overalls can be quickly scorched.

I maintain the boiler water level within a very close range so that the front end of the crownsheet is covered on the steep inclines and yet not too high to cause carryover of water with the steam. The safety valves must not lift, as we will lose 5 or 6 pounds of pressure while they are resetting, and

their lifting may cause carryover of water and consequently stall the train.

In the darkened cab, facing the white-hot fire, my viewing is limited to observing the water and steam gauges illuminated by their shrouded lamps. However, I know my engineer is at his post, for I hear the sound of the exhaust change as he makes the final adjustment of cut-off at the beginning of the grade—the reverse lever is now in its lowest notch. The exhaust blast is deafening, the speed drops to 5 mph, and the locomotive pitches or sways alternately from side to side with each stroke of the pistons. Sparks are rocketing from the stack. It is amazing how the machine can stand such a beating, day after day. Likewise, there is some toll on the firemen. I recall the Bible passage from Job, Chapter 5, Verse 7, "Yet man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

We plow onward in the blackness. Finally we are at the top on the grade, so no further firing is required. Standing on the tender deck, blinking my eyes to help restore my night vision,

and facing the backhead, I become aware that we are accelerating very rapidly. Suddenly, the white face of my engineer appears with panic-stricken eyes beneath the visor of his cap. He stumbles around the boiler head and in an urgent voice cries out, "Where are we?"

I yell, "Shut her off! We're in the yard!" We are indeed in the yard, lurching violently through a sharp turnout, fortunately rolling into an empty track where we have ample room to stop. As we grind to a halt, I wonder how my engineer could ever go to sleep with all the noise, vibration, and activity around him. I let the engineman mollify our brakeman, unhappy with his being propelled swiftly and roughly through the switches! ■

VERNON L. SMITH retired in 1976 after a career as a locomotive designer and railway mechanical officer.



Detroit:



Where the
Central's diesels met

By J. David Ingles
Photos from the author's collection

JUST AS southeastern Michigan and its many auto plants became home to people with heritages as diverse as Polish, African-American, Lebanese, and British, Detroit in the early 1960's was the melting pot for New York Central diesels. Central sent locomotives ranging from Alco RS2's to Baldwin Sharks to FM C-Liners to the Motor City to spice up the usual EMD fare of SW8's, GP7's, E8's, and F7's.

This was a powerful mix for a young railfan moving from his formative years into the era of mobility. For someone just barely too young to have made his own treks south to see daily revenue service steam on the likes of Baltimore & Ohio, Nickel Plate, Norfolk & Western, and Pennsy, diesels were where it was at. The Grand Trunk

Western provided some last-gasp daily steam entertainment, but GTW was "across town" from home turf in west suburban Dearborn. Furthermore, it seemed that whenever "our gang" would make a pilgrimage out of the area to see fantrip steam, say on the Burlington or into Canada, the iron horses would be belching their smoke into gray skies and prancing the high iron in the rain. (In addition to my Dad, me, Hank Goerke, and a few others, our local gang included a couple of guys whose names would become well known in the hobby in later years: Jim Hediger, who joined the MODEL RAILROADER staff shortly after I came to TRAINS in 1971, and Emery Gulash, whose 16mm movies are a staple for

Green Frog video productions.) All signs for us pointed to the future, to the diesel. The bond would be cemented when one of us, Jerry Pinkepank of Lansing, would easily talk TRAINS Editor David P. Morgan into going to bat for the minority interest of youth, convincing publisher Al Kalmbach to turn out something called the "Diesel Spotter's Guide." An era was launched.

Anchoring the launching pad, at least for our regular activities, was the New York Central. We were ecumenical enough to check in regularly with all the local carriers, but Chesapeake & Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wabash, DT&I, and GTW usually offered the same old thing, give or take a BL2 or Erie-built here or an FA or RS1 there.

Flagship of NYC's Detroit-Chicago corridor was the *Twilight Limited*, swinging into the Telegraph Road curve in Dearborn on July 8, 1963, behind the usual E8/E7 combo with their mismatched-width stripes.



The Central was not known for being ecumenical. Unlike rival Pennsy, which seemed to take the "auto showroom" approach to any given Midwestern engine terminal by stationing a representative from each builder (everything from a GE 44-tonner to a Lima-Hamilton transfer center-cab), NYC made local diesel-parts inventories a high priority. Central's EMD road freight units generally didn't go east of Buffalo, and you seldom found their Alco counterparts west of Detroit or Elkhart, Ind. Unless there was a GM auto plant to be worked, all yard switchers east of Buffalo seemed to be Alcos, while west of the Niagara Frontier, EMD switchers reigned. There were exceptions, of course, especially for the true minorities: NYC's FM goats were found in Buffalo, its Limas in Cincinnati, and its Baldwins were scattered throughout old Big Four territory in downstate Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Ditto for the Central's FM and Baldwin road units, which worked out of their home in Beech Grove, Ind., now Amtrak's big shop.

All this put Detroit in the kettle above the fire. The pile of logs was at Central's roundhouse and terminal a half mile west of the West Detroit junction, near the east end of NYC's Livernois Yard, its main Detroit facility (named for a major north-south avenue). Curved servicing tracks, an old concrete coaling tower, an almost-complete roundhouse with turntable—Livernois (or West Detroit, as we called it) had it all, and the railroaders were friendly. Permission slips? Hard hats? Entrance gates? Never heard of 'em. (They don't call these the "glory days" without reason.) We young diesel fans were a minority, and railroad folks were glad to see us, as long as we behaved ourselves.

The bubble of interest for New York Central diesels would fill several Logan metal slide file trays as at least two of us, Hank Goerke and I (now deceased, Hank took about half the photos here), tried to shoot every road unit in several series by the number. The bubble wouldn't burst until the PC merger of 1968. Please enjoy the accompanying selection of 1960's NYC scenes at what was the center of our rail universe.



Top to bottom: Across the Detroit River in Windsor, Ont., an FA-FB pair of Alcos leads four RS32's on eastbound hotshot NY-4 past Pelton Tower guarding the C&O diamond on January 20, 1962. Even in the new solid gray, E8/E7 stripes didn't match, evidenced on train 355, the *Michigan*, approaching the C&O crossing in Wayne, Mich., October 2, 1966. Daily-except-Sunday RDC-3 Beeliner 395 departs Detroit's Michigan Central Terminal for Bay City in February 1964. Preceding pages: West Detroit in May 1964.



Before we knew about fill-in-flash photography, we'd just shoot units at the roundhouse with available light. The lead unit in the consist at left in the December 1962 photo above is FM C-Liner 5014, re-engined with an EMD.

Left column, from top: One of NYC's four Baldwin Baby-face freight cabs (also EMD-ized) was in town June 7, 1962, and one of its 14 FM Erie-built trails F7 1787 south at Ecorse that November. Sharks, the Baby-face's successor, occasionally would swim up from Big Four country, as this one did in November 1961. The crew on SW1 683, southbound at Delray junction in Detroit, shows what the "front porch" on the little 600 h.p. EMD goats was *really* for.

Right: In a July 1960 photo from the Detroit Terminal embankment, that's Dad's 1957 Chevy wagon parked on Southern Avenue and Ford's big River Rouge complex in Dearborn at the rear as two GP9's—5989 in the uncommon two-tone gray—head west on the main line. I was there to shoot C&O 15, the evening *Pere Marquette* for Grand Rapids, whose track is next to the DT.





In a view from the Miller Road overpass in Dearborn, just to the right of the GP9 photo on the previous page but five years later in August 1965, a freight rolls eastward behind five GP35's. Its caboose is about at Town Line cabin (right), and three other freights occupy tracks in the yard's western extremity.



A morning ritual was the appearance of Chicago-New York hotshot NY-4, often with Alcos but usually with some, or all, of NYC's newest power (though not on this November 1964 day, when two venerable FA's led two GE U25B's). It changed crews here, and the units took on diesel at NYC's primitive mainline "fuel rack" along Southern Avenue at Lonyo, an old 10,097-gallon tank car parked on a track section. Sometimes, NYC "brass" outnumbered workers.

Town Line cabin was a small shack at the extreme west end of NYC's yard tracks. In a late-afternoon view in November 1967 (right), a very late NY-4 behind six units (three U25B's, an RS32 second, and a pair of FA's nose-to-nose at the rear) is overtaking a stopped local from Willow Run behind two F7's. This is approximately the site of today's Dearborn Amtrak station. On September 15, 1963, at the same place (far right), a westbound freight behind three F7's is leaving the yard, crossing over to the westbound main. **1**



Lima's last steam locomotive

The magic—and the mysteries—of Nickel Plate 2-8-4 No. 779

By John B. Corns

NOBODY REALIZED IT AT THE TIME, but the shiny new Nickel Plate 2-8-4 simmering in the morning sun would become the final steamer constructed in the 70-year history of Ohio's legendary Lima Locomotive Works. The unlucky day was Friday, May 13, 1949.

At the time Lima was an industrial city situated at a confluence of five major railroads—Pennsylvania, Erie, Baltimore & Ohio, Nickel Plate (NKP), and Detroit, Toledo & Ironton. The rambling locomotive plant on the town's south side was the area's single largest employer. Famous for its line of patented Shay logging locomotives and for introducing the high-horsepower concept of Super Power, Lima's erecting shops had produced some of the most impressive reciprocating steam locomotives ever to operate on America's railroads. Lima had designed and built the world's first 2-8-4 Berkshire, 2-10-4 Texas, and 2-6-6-6 Allegheny locomotives, and was endeavoring to produce a poppet-valve, double-Belpaire-boilered 4-8-6 as a powerful, fuel-efficient rebuttal to the challenge posed by diesel-electric locomotives. Although it was the smallest of the Big Three commercial builders of mainline steam, Lima had earned a singular reputation for quality.

Dieselization was spreading across the nation in 1949, and, after reaching an all-time high of 4300 employees during World War II, Lima's force of boilermakers, pipefitters, and foundrymen reporting to work at 1046 South Main Street had been reduced, thanks to a paucity of orders for new steam locomotives. For a time Lima had busied itself with orders for export 2-8-0's and 2-8-2's, but had constructed just 77 new steamers for domestic use since the war's end.

It also was the last of the old locomotive builders to get into the expand-

ing market for new diesels. Railroading's love affair with the diesel was in bloom, and upstarts like Fairbanks-Morse and General Motors—even steam stalwarts Baldwin and Alco—already were fully committed to the production of the internal combustion newcomer long before Lima had even considered the idea. In fact, on June 16, 1948, Alco ended 97 years of continuous steam locomotive production with completion of its final coal-burning products, seven 2-8-4's for Pittsburgh & Lake Erie. Ironically, tenders for Alco's last steam locomotives were assembled by Lima since Alco's erstwhile tender shop in Schenectady was filled with diesels under construction.

Sticking with steam

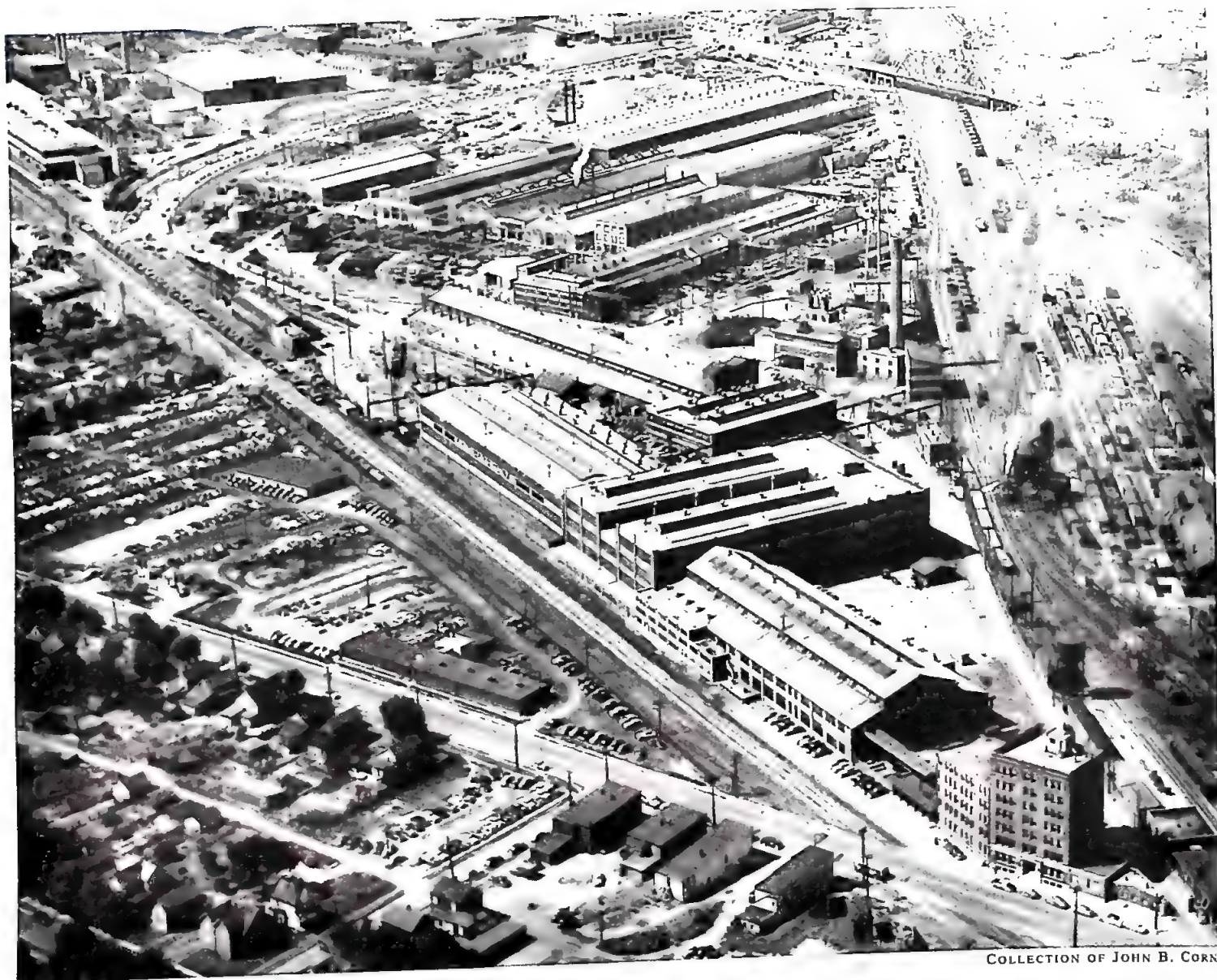
In spite of Lima's commitment to the development and construction of new steam locomotives, factions within the company believed that a locomotive builder could unite with a builder of internal combustion engines to quickly produce diesel locomotives. In order to make up for lost time, Lima in 1947 merged with the General Machinery Corporation of Hamilton, Ohio, to form Lima-Hamilton Corporation. Immediately the futuristic Hamilton influence began to subordinate old-line Lima interests, and design began on several models of diesel yard switchers. Remarkably, with no diesels yet constructed to demonstrate for prospective customers, L-H took orders for several before blueprints had been drawn.

With its entry into the diesel market, and its track record on steam, Lima-Hamilton appeared to be well suited to meeting any motive-power needs. While not operating anywhere near capacity, in spring 1949 Lima's shops still were busy turning out modern steam locomotives—22 Berkshires for Louisville & Nashville and 10 for the NKP. Confident that the lack of

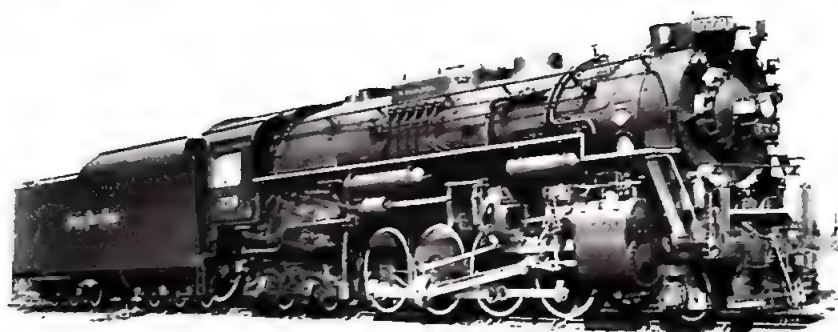
Was NKP 779 truly the final steam locomotive to come from Lima Locomotive Works hallowed halls? The records say "yes."

Nickel Plate 779 pours it on as it pulls away from a water stop at Fredonia, N.Y., in a March 17, 1957, photo by Jim Shaughnessy. One year later it would make its last run.





COLLECTION OF JOHN B. CORNS



LIMA-HAMILTON

In a southwesterly aerial view of the sprawling Lima works, the Nickel Plate yard is visible at right. Tracing the east edge of the plant is the B&O. In an "official" builder's photo, an artist's brush has converted Berkshire 776 to 779.

orders for new steamers was temporary, hard-line Lima officials continued advertising L-H's line of Super Power engines in trade magazines, and produced hard-bound catalogs touting the last several orders for big steam, including a modern-day reincarnation of its original product, the Shay geared locomotive. Inquiries on new steam locomotives had been received by Lima as late as February 1949, but there had not been an order for nearly a year. The most recent had come from long-time customer and neighbor, Nickel Plate.

In spring 1948 NKP successfully completed

three months of mainline passenger-train operations with its small fleet of 11 Alco PA1 diesels. Needing additional freight locomotives for its famous High Speed Service on the 513-mile Chicago-Buffalo run, NKP decided to test some EMD road freight diesels before committing to the purchase of any motive power, steam or diesel. Using its own dynamometer car coupled behind an A-B-B-A lashup of borrowed Burlington EMD F3 diesels, Nickel Plate during June 15-20 conducted four diesel-powered test runs of its hottest freight trains (two eastbound and two westbound) to compare running times, drawbar horsepower, and operating costs of the diesels, which were configured in 4500- and 6000-h.p. sets for the tests. Except for monitoring coal consumption and clocking running times for just one steam-powered round trip, NKP did not test its 2-8-4's at this time for a true head-to-head comparison, relying instead on Berkshire horsepower curves already on file in its motive power department.

Loosely controlled testing, omission of some data, and dubious conclusions in the July 16, 1948, official report showed very slight differences in operating costs, drawbar horsepower, and terminal-to-terminal time between 2-8-4's and the



RALPH B. CLARK

4500 h.p. diesel.

diesels bettered the
about every major area except fuel costs.

The 6000 h.p.
Berkshires in just

More importantly to the Nickel Plate, the test report claimed that dieselizing just these four freights would boost annual costs \$73,093 and \$266,613, respectively, capital expenses that could not be justified on a railroad whose freights remained 100-percent steam powered. The high-performance 2-8-4 was perfect for use on NKP's high-speed bridge route across the flat mid-central states; fast trains of 80 to 90 carloads could be dispatched as required to assure on-time delivery with connecting railroads. There was little need for the lower-speed lugging power of A-B-B-A diesels on a railroad whose freight speed limit of 60 mph regularly was ignored by eager engineers.

Last Berks ordered

Two weeks before the final test report had been sent to Nickel Plate President F.S. Hales, the road on July 2, 1948, placed an order with Lima-Hamilton for 10 new 2-8-4's. This would be the first of just two instances in which an American railroad (Norfolk & Western was the other) would test diesels, then place an order for new steam. Skeptics (notably Santa Fe) claimed that Nickel Plate had manipulated the test results in favor of its beloved Berkshires to prevent—or at least postpone—dieselization of mainline freights, but no one was able to prove the charges. This debate over alleged Nickel Plate deception would continue among railroad historians for five decades.

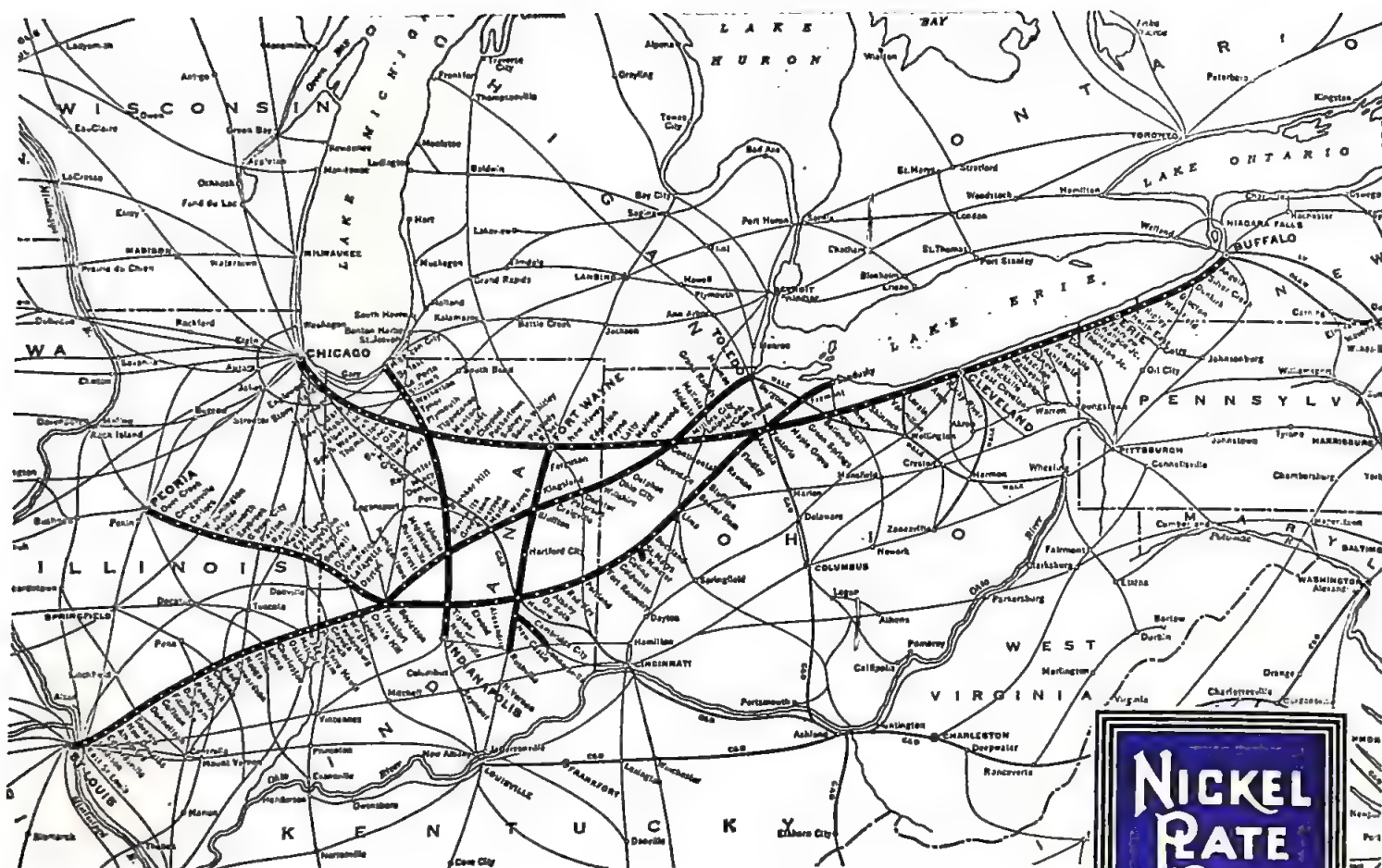
The skeptics were proven correct nearly a half-

century later when I discovered original Nickel Plate Road AFE (Authority For Expenditure) No. 15854 among old files removed from a warehouse in the Roanoke (Va.) headquarters of NKP successor N&W after the 1964 merger. This long-buried form revealed that on June 17, 1948—three days before the six-day diesel test runs were completed—the railroad's board of directors approved the \$2,350,000 purchase price of 10 new S-3 class Berkshires. It appears that NKP never intended to buy any road diesels, regardless of the outcome of the tests, and later relied on the manipulated test to justify its purchase of additional steam.

Built under Lima order No. 1209, the 10 class S-3 Berkshires were numbered 770-779 and closely followed the dimensions of Nickel Plate's 70 earlier Lima and Alco 2-8-4's, but with numerous internal improvements such as the Franklin E-2 radial buffer and molybdenum firebox side sheets, syphons, and staybolts. It had been nearly five years since the NKP received its last 2-8-4's, and some manufacturers had ceased making certain steam locomotive appliances, so subtle differences in appearances and materials were noted between the earlier S-2 and newer S-3 engines. Also, a few specification misunderstandings (throwbacks to Chesapeake & Ohio's pre-1947 control of NKP) led to further alterations in the as-delivered appearance of the S-3's, such as Futura-style numerals in illuminated numberboards and headlights.

If a few people had gotten their way, the S-3's would have looked radically different. Nickel Plate enginemen had met with management to request that the road's newest Berks be constructed with

Nickel Plate 0-8-0 205 pulls a gleaming 779 through the back gate at Lima and onto NKP property at 9:40 a.m. on May 13, 1949.



all-weather cabs to provide better protection from the cold blast of Midwest winter winds, but their suggestion was denied for reasons of economy. Chief Mechanical Officer T.C. Shortt wanted the S-3's to be exact duplicates of the last batch of NKP S-2's (Nos. 755-769) constructed by Lima in 1944, except for reversed locations of the steam dome and sandbox (as found on C&O 2-8-4's). Since the order for the new engines already had been placed with Lima-Hamilton, his proposal never materialized. While preparing blueprints and specifications for the S-3's, L-H estimating engineers calculated the base price per engine to be \$225,200.00, F.O.B. Lima, but later additions and deletions of some appliances and other adjustments cut that price to \$224,866.20.

Arriving in style

The first Nickel Plate Berkshire in the last Lima steam order was completed on March 14, 1949; the remaining nine appeared sporadically during the next two months. Almost prophetically, on Thursday, May 12, the *Lima News* carried an article announcing that General Motors' diesel-powered "Train of Tomorrow" would arrive in town the following Tuesday for public display at the B&O depot. As Lima citizens sat down after dinner that evening to read their newspapers and make plans to visit the new GM train, finishing touches were being made to Berkshire 779, the last locomotive in the Nickel Plate order.

The next morning—Friday the 13th—Lima-Hamilton hostler Fred Owens ran 779 on the plant test track, where L-H and railroad employ-

ees made their final inspection of the 2-8-4. Its polished steel rods and Baker valve gear glistened, and its huge, 18-inch red bronze bell glowed pink in the early morning sun. The Berkshire's gleaming coat of black Dulux enamel was accented by white driver tires and running board edges, imitation gold "Nickel Plate Road" lettering, and red diamond-shaped Lima-Hamilton builder's plates bearing serial No. 9380, the highest boiler number for any Lima steamer. Since sister 776 had served as the S-3 portrait locomotive for plant photographer Don Jardine a week earlier (thus delaying its delivery to NKP by four days), no official photos were made this day. There was no fanfare or ceremony of any kind. After all, no one dreamed it would be Lima's last steam locomotive.

In a remarkable coincidence, last-minute preparations were under way at the same moment in the nearby Tank Shop for the grand unveiling later that day of Lima-Hamilton's very first diesel locomotive, a 1000-h.p. switcher. Elated over the new line of diesels and the prospect of continued employment, company officials and plant workers were too busy with the commotion surrounding diesel demonstrator No. 1000 to notice the Berkshire. No one could know it at the time, but as they prepared to witness one historic moment, they turned their backs on another. To them, 779 was nothing special, just another of 7548 steam locomotives Lima had completed. But that shiny new diesel represented their hopes for the future. Unfortunately for them, that future prematurely





NKP PHOTO BY JOHN D. BURGER; COLLECTION OF JOHN B. CORNS

ended September 12, 1951, after just 174 Lima-Hamilton diesels had been completed.

After 10 copies of ICC Form 3 had been filled out and signed by L-H locomotive inspectors Grover C. Myers, Arthur T. Moorman, and Raymond J. McNamara, the plant's back gate was opened and 779 slowly steamed to the edge of the property and stopped. Since L-H employees were not permitted to operate locomotives on Nickel Plate tracks (and vice versa), several plant workers climbed down from the cab. Diminutive NKP Lima-built 0-8-0 205 coupled onto the 779's front coupler to pull the 2-8-4 onto railroad property. It was 9:40 a.m. The last Lima steam locomotive had been delivered.

The 205 then shoved 779 westward through NKP's yard toward the coal tower and was cut off. A hostler ran the Berk over to the dock and put three tons of sand into the sand dome, filled the empty tender with 20 tons of coal, and topped off the tender with 12,000 gallons of water. The 779 then steamed over to the roundhouse, where a machinist and two helpers prepared the 2-8-4 by providing it with 5 gallons of valve oil, 7 gallons of car oil, 3 pounds of slab grease, 8 pounds of Alemite grease, and 10 pounds of rod grease. The fireman's seatbox was filled with standard NKP items—a packing iron, type E coupler knuckle, feed valve wrench, two feed valve gaskets, pump-type grease gun, and wads of cotton waste.

Going to work

Unlike the "war baby" S-2 Berkshires, which required that their drivers be dropped and all

grease cellars and journals be steam-cleaned and refilled immediately upon delivery to Nickel Plate, the S-3's were the beneficiaries of postwar workmanship so exemplary that the new engines did not even require a break-in run. Roundhouse foreman R.J. Mahoney declared the two-hour-old 779 ready for service, and the head-end crew backed the world's newest Berkshire to its train, the second section of eastbound No. 90, a St. Louis-Buffalo merchandise run. At noon, Nickel Plate 779 departed town on its first run, dusting the Locomotive Works with its smoke plume as it steamed off into the history books.

Lacking the Automatic Train Stop (ATS) equipment required on NKP's West End in the Chicago area, the new 2-8-4's spent their careers polishing the rails on the 247 miles of railroad east of Bellevue, Ohio. With NKP's average revenue freight haul of 222.27 miles in 1948, it was not unusual for the S-3's to run 8000 to 9000 miles per month, rushing trainloads of fresh produce, meat, and other perishables to make time-sensitive connections in Buffalo with 14 daily trains of the PRR, Lackawanna, Erie, New York Central, and Lehigh Valley for deliveries to East Coast cities. Nickel Platers always knew when the 779 was in town, because, for some reason, its standard Nathan 6-chime whistle had a decidedly lower tone than those of other NKP Berkshires.

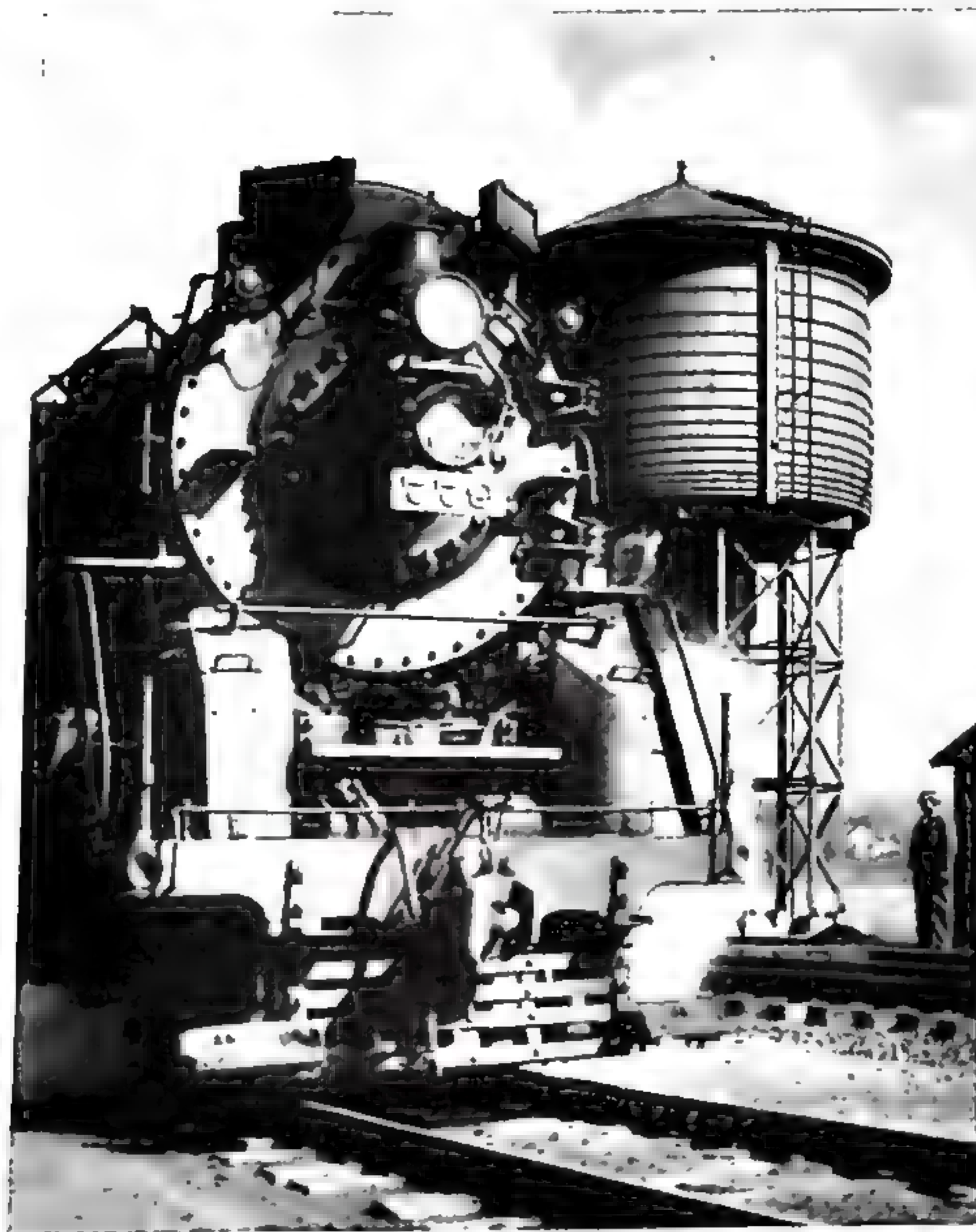
After just a month of operation, Nickel Plate's newest steam locomotive was tapped for display at the Chicago Railroad Fair, then entering its second and final season, to represent the best of Lima-Hamilton and the NKP. The 779 was with-

It's August 1949, and crowds at the Chicago Railroad Fair's "Wheels a-Rolling" pageant get a grandstand view of 779 as the 2-8-4 goes pilot-to-pilot with an Illinois Central 4-8-2.



HERBERT H. HARWOOD JR.

Framed by a water plug and switchstand, 779 rolls eastbound tonnage into Painesville, Ohio, in August 1956. The water tower at Fredonia, N.Y., is the backdrop for a March 1957 portrait.



JIM SHUGHNESSY

drawn from regular service and spruced up in the road's shops in Conneaut, Ohio, before shipment to the Windy City. In the process, the Berk received a twin sealed-beam headlight and Nickel Plate's first installation of a Mars White Signal Light, a safety appliance later synonymous with NKP Berkshires. Shopmen also replaced the non-standard, Futura-style numerals in 779's number-

boards with the correct serif style preferred by the Nickel Plate, and added very non-standard stainless-steel cylinder-head covers.

Displayed in the Eastern Railroads' exhibit during its 3½-month hiatus from road duty, 779 was fired up and operated under its own steam in the Fair's popular Wheels a-Rolling pageant July 24-August 2 in spite of its official "out of service" ICC status. After the Fair closed October 2, the visiting locomotives were returned to their owners, and the 779 was towed dead to Conneaut for its quarterly inspection. Ten days later, the Berkshire was back to business powering high-speed freights.

Advertisements promoting Lima-Hamilton's latest reciprocating products continued to appear in *Railway Age* magazine as late as the September 10, 1949, issue, but, despite double-page spreads featuring gleaming C&O 4-8-4's and 2-6-6-6's, L-H received no further steam orders. The diesel faction at L-H had been eager to quit steam to concentrate entirely on diesels, and in August the unofficial word was handed down by Ben Shultz, engineer of testing, that steam was dead at Lima. The Super Power era had ended.

Touching up the past

Formal cessation of steam construction meant that Nickel Plate 779, holder of the highest boiler construction number of any Lima-built steamer, was elevated to the status of Lima's last steam locomotive. It was anticipated that requests soon would pour into Lima-Hamilton for photos of the suddenly famous 2-8-4, but, remember, the completed 779 never was officially photographed.



HERBERT H. HARWOOD JR.

Not wanting to disappoint anyone, L-H had local commercial artist Sam Elwood Rogers retouch a photo of sister 776 to resemble the 779 by changing the road numbers. In one of his last acts as Lima-Hamilton's chief photographer, Don Jardine shot an 8x10 copy negative of the doctored image and blocked out the background with red opaque paint, just as he had done on scores of other official locomotive portraits. Hundreds of bogus "779" 8x10 glossies were then contact-printed by Jardine's darkroom assistant, Art Smith, and distributed to magazines, books, and eager railroad fans. But if you look closely at the builder's plate in the photo, you can just barely make out 776's serial number, 9377.

I discovered this little chicanery 30 years later when I puzzled over the lack of razor-sharpness that should have existed if the 8x10 negative of the 779 had been an original. Film-code notches in the upper right-hand corner of the existing 8x10 negative of 779 confirmed that it was on Kodak's Professional Copy Film, not the Super Ortho Press film Don Jardine normally would have used for exterior locomotive photographs.

The 779 had an uneventful nine-year career on the Nickel Plate, receiving a few minor additions such as a train radio and corresponding third turbo-generator during Class 3 and 5 repairs at Conneaut. In 1956 NKP announced it intended to dieselize all of its operations by 1962, but a nationwide recession and deliveries of 30 new Alco and EMD road diesels rapidly advanced that date. In March 1957 steam still accounted for 52.5 percent of NKP gross ton miles, but, lacking the ATS

equipment required on the West End, the less-flexible S-3's were doomed to an early retirement. When the newest 2-8-4's came due for class repairs in late 1957 and early 1958, they were retired and pushed into the growing dead line of retired NKP steamers. Remarkably, older S-2's continued to be shopped at Conneaut until one day in June 1958, when shopmen were told during their lunch break not to return to work that afternoon—their skills no longer were needed.

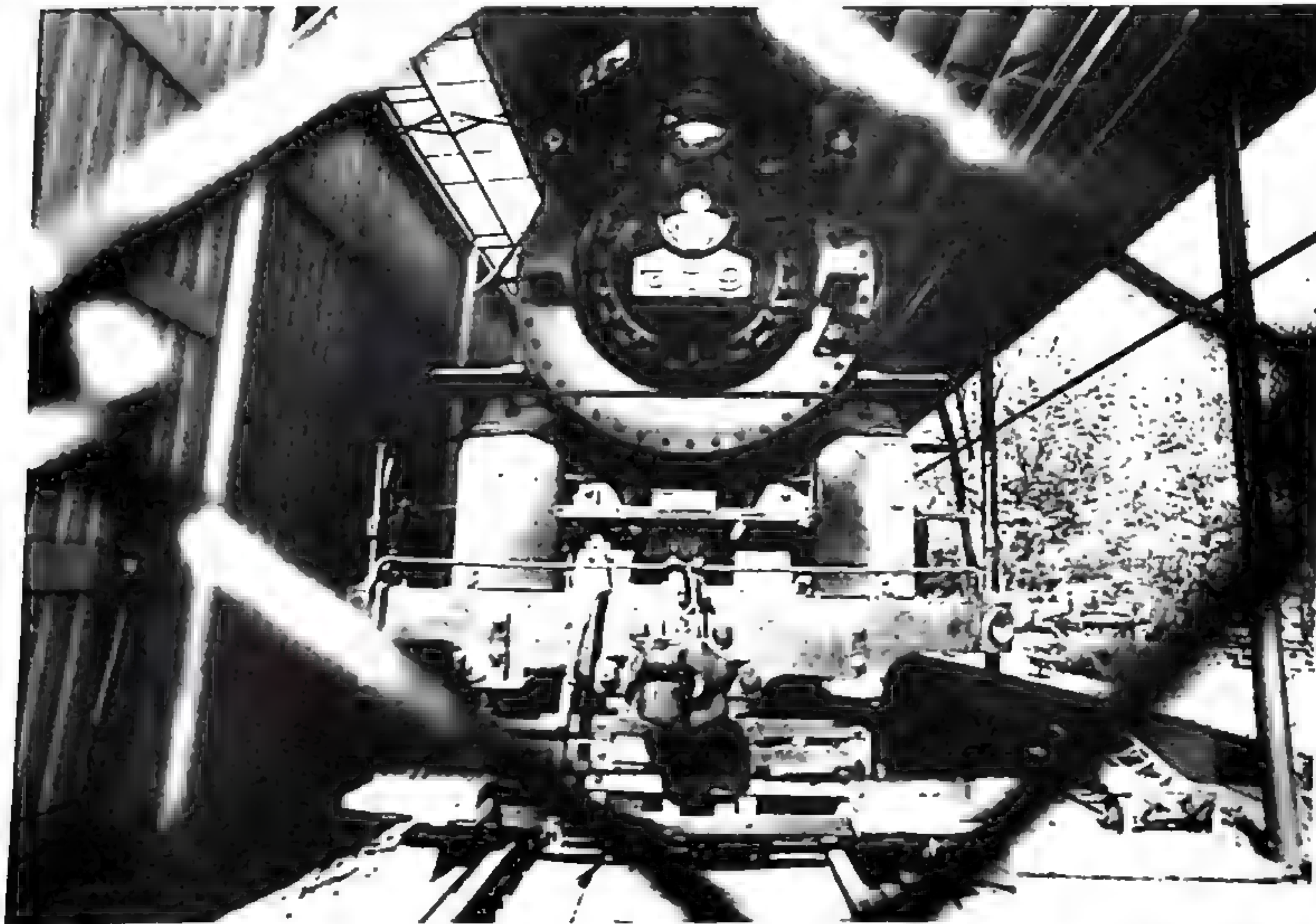
Having operated 667,095 revenue miles during 92 months of active service, 779 made its last run into Conneaut on March 24, 1958. Its celebrity as Lima's last steam locomotive just about guaranteed the Berkshire's future as a museum display, and Nickel Plate spotted the cold hulk next to the roundhouse for safekeeping. Incredibly, on June 12 a storehouse employee suggested to a visiting 15-year-old steam fan that he take 779's bell home as a souvenir! The boy's father remarked that the bell was too heavy and awkward for them to remove, and "probably would ruin the springs of our car. Besides, we have no tools." The storehouse worker promptly handed the boy a crescent wrench, instructing him to take home one of 779's Lima-Hamilton builder's plates instead.

"I removed the builder's plate on the right side of the boiler because that was the side the engineer sat on," the now-middle-aged fan recalled four decades later. "I had some trouble getting that plate off the engine, bending the diamond and leaving a little piece of the plate's right corner still attached to the boiler." Someone, possibly souvenir hunters or even the Nickel Plate itself,

In the waning weeks of its career, 779 storms through Cleveland with eastbound 2nd 08-2, with a reefer block up front, in January 1958. The S-3's frequented NKP's East End.



NICKEL PLATE PHOTO BY WILLIS MCCALED; COLLECTION OF JOHN B. CORNS



JOHN UCKLEY

Patron saints of 779 before its 1963 dedication (from left): John H. Keller, Ray Runser of BLH, Ray Beer, Joe Dunlap Jr., James MacDonald, Charles Guy, and Frank Cheny. Later, 779 rests under its protective shelter in Lima's Lincoln Park.

later removed 779's other builder's plate and rectangular front number plate while the engine languished at Conneaut, but neither has been found.

A political pawn

The 779 was retired from service on July 16, 1958, and the following February 3 its record was marked with the saddest of all phrases: "... will be sold for scrap, and will not again be used by this company. [Signed] O.R. Pendy, Chief Mechanical Officer." Because of 779's significant role in the history of Lima, the city council in 1959 began pressing NKP to donate the engine for a proposed

exhibit honoring the community's long involvement with the railroad industry. After four years of negotiations and five years of outdoor storage, 779 went to Nickel Plate's roundhouse at Calumet Yard in Chicago in 1963 for cosmetic restoration.

In reality, 779 was being used as a political pawn by NKP and successor N&W in order to assuage the city of Lima. An 1880 agreement between the city and NKP predecessor Lake Erie & Western called for the railroad's repair shops to be located in Lima in perpetuity, in exchange for 20 acres of land. But by 1954 the tiny, antiquated facilities were no longer adequate, so NKP wanted to raze them. Fearing the loss of jobs, the city and railroad unions fought back by invoking the 75-year-old agreement, and by 1956 a compromise called for construction in Lima of NKP's new system storehouse. Donation of 779 to Lima upon its retirement would be an added bonus.

A restored 779 arrived back in Lima on August 14, 1963, and was stored inside the U.S. Army's Ordnance Modification Center on the city's south side for three more years until a display shelter in Lincoln Park could be completed. During this time, a five-sided replacement front number plate (a type never worn by the 779) was cobbled together from number plates off NKP 2-8-2 506 and other locomotives going to scrap. Nickel Plate always took great care with the appearance of its donated locomotives, and, recognizing the importance of civic pride in these monuments to the days of steam, President Myron Phipps expressed his concern over the lack of 779's builder's plates, as well as those of sister 765, then being prepared

for display in Fort Wayne, Ind., in the guise of No. 767, the steamer that officially opened the city's grade separation project in 1955.

A plan was discussed in which L-H successor Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton would prepare replica builder's plates not only for these two Nickel Plate locomotives, but also for C&O 2-6-6-6 Allegheny 1601 donated to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., in 1956. Alas, the foundry used an old diamond builder's plate off a scrapped NKP 4-6-2 as the pattern, so 779 received builder's plates incorrectly worded "Lima Locomotive Works," not "Lima-Hamilton Corporation." In honor of 779's recent 50th birthday in 1999, former Lima plant photographer Louis Thouvenin and I had a pair of correct aluminum replica builder's plates made for the locomotive, and friend Wayne York fashioned an accurate rectangular front number plate in his home workshop.

On July 6, 1966, 2-8-4 No. 779, NKP wooden caboose 1091 (built by Lima's own Lafayette Car Works in 1882), and NKP wooden business car 5 (Pullman, 1883) were pulled from the army depot to the DT&I transfer by Norfolk & Western SW8 112, still in NKP livery. The historic rolling stock was then picked up by DT&I NW2 912 and carefully moved into Lincoln Park for the official dedication ceremonies four days later. Allen County Historical Society officials John R. Carnes and James A. MacDonnell were responsible for construction of the park's shelter and restoration of a DT&I depot relocated from Uniopolis, Ohio. Retired Nickel Plate conductor John H. Keller came up with the idea for an exhibit, arranged for donations of the depot and rolling stock from the railroads, and has provided a 33-year stewardship of the park's displays, visiting them every morning during what he calls his "morning devotions." His son, John Jr., regularly volunteers time to paint, clean, and maintain the exhibits.

As this is written in 1999, a \$200,000 fund-raising effort has begun for a permanent endowment for these railroad relics. Incidentally, while 779 wore decorative stainless-steel cylinder-head covers for its Railroad Fair visit, today's covers are fully functional, hiding the fact that 779 has no cylinder heads—over the past 30 years the displayed Berk has served as an internal parts source for NKP 2-8-4 sisters 759 and 765, which survived to operate in private excursion service.

One more mystery

Yet, there still is one more little-known controversy surrounding Lima's last steam locomotive.

The thick, Lima locomotive record book of boiler construction numbers indicates there had been another coal-burner still on the property in 1949 when 779 was completed, clouding the issue

The top document is an "ORIGINAL FREIGHT BILL" from The New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad Co., dated May 13, 1949. It details the shipment of a locomotive and tender, with consignee T.C. Short and destination Lima, Ohio. The bottom document is an "ANNUAL LOCOMOTIVE INSPECTION AND REPAIR REPORT" for locomotive No. 1991, inspected on May 11, 1949. The report includes a detailed checklist of inspections and repairs, with handwritten notes and signatures.

shipped from Lima-Hamilton on June 11, nearly a month after the 779 steamed over to the NKP roundhouse! Even though 779 had the highest boiler serial number for a Lima steamer, was it possible that L&N 1991 was actually completed after May 13, thus making it Lima's last steam locomotive? Had the wrong Berkshire been placed in Lincoln Park? The ramifications presented by the book's entry caused some of us Nickel Plate partisans to wince, but we kept the secret so as not to taint the reputation of the enshrined 779 or begin an endless debate among railroad historians.

A half-century after the fact, a thorough search of ICC boiler records and Lima-Hamilton correspondence with the L&N attempted to ascertain exactly which Berkshire—Nickel Plate 779 or L&N 1991—actually was Lima's last steam locomotive. The evidence shows that L&N 1991 was completed, inspected, and approved for service by L-H and railroad officials not on June 11, but rather on May 11, two days before NKP 779 rolled out of the erecting halls, thus ending the "last locomotive" debate. Since L&N surely would not have allowed a completed 1991 to sit at the Lima-Hamilton plant for a full month after it had been finished, and with the curious coincidence that both dates are the 11th of the month, it's reasonable to assume that the handwritten "6-11-49" shipping date for the 1991, as stated in the Lima boiler record book, is a clerical error. It should have been written as "5-11-49," but apparently a number "6" was written instead of a "5." The correct locomotive is in Lincoln Park after all. ■

Comparison of 779's original freight bill for delivery (top), dated May 13, 1949, and L&N 1991's ICC inspection form, dated two days earlier, indicates that 779 was, indeed, Lima's last steamer.

Going out in glory

Just before it quit, the RGS ran some memorable fantrips

By Mallory Hope Ferrell

THE MORNING DAWNED bright and crisp and clear—it was probably the most beautiful spring sunrise that this almost-14-year-old had ever seen. I was in the fabled town of Ridgway, home of the Rio Grande Southern, and a dream of mine was about to become reality: I was about to ride this most scenic and fascinating of all the Colorado narrow gauges.

The Rio Grande Southern Railroad was constructed by Otto Mears, the “Pathfinder of the San Juans,” in the early 1890’s between Durango and Ridgway, 162 miles through the lofty, snow-covered peaks of southwestern Colorado. The silver-mining boom was at its height, and Mears issued filigree passes of silver that were good over his new railroad. All too soon the silver bonanza went bust with the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893, so for the next 60 years, the RGS struggled over the high mountain passes, fighting winter snowstorms and the declining fortunes of the mines.

Photo Stop, 1947, a painting by Philip A. Ronfor, depicts railfans frantically trying to photograph handsome Rio Grande Southern Ten-Wheeler No. 20 during a “Rocky Club” excursion.







TWO PHOTOS: MALLORY HOPE FERRELL

For many years, RGS was a ward of its 3-foot-gauge neighbor, the Denver & Rio Grande, with which it connected at both ends. To cut costs, RGS ended regular steam-powered mixed-train service in 1933. But on this May 1949 morning, a steam passenger train would return once again to the "Silver San Juan Scenic Line," one of several excursions over the RGS after World War II. The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club was the sponsor of this two-day trip to historic Telluride, and I had a ticket and several rolls of Verachrome film.

Slim-gauge boomer

Motive power would be newly acquired 2-8-0 No. 74, a real slim-gauge boomer now working for her fourth employer. Built for the Colorado & Northwestern, the engine later saw service on the Denver, Boulder & Western before being sold to the Colorado & Southern for use on the famed South



During the May 1947 excursion, passengers stretch their legs and take photos at the Trout Lake water tank; *TRAINS* Magazine's David P. Morgan stands on the platform of caboose 0400. In another May 1947 scene, Goose 4 and the railfan special are at the Placerville depot; damaged rotary plow No. 2 is on a siding behind the Goose.

Park 3-foot-gauge line. When she was built by Brooks in 1897, the Consolidation had been touted as the most powerful narrow-gauge locomotive ever constructed. RGS had purchased her the previous winter from the Morse Brothers, a Denver-based secondhand machinery dealer.

Down at the brick roundhouse south of the joint D&RGW-RGS depot, the 74 was being readied for her run, fresh from a thorough rebuilding in the Ridgway shops and sporting a dark-green boiler. A freshly painted RGS "sunrise" herald gleamed on her tender's flanks.

As we boarded the cars, I was im-

pressed to be in the company of such famous photographers as Richard H. "Dick" Kindig and Otto Perry. Other "notables" included artist Phil Ronfor and a young *TRAINS* Magazine associate editor named David P. Morgan. Many of the photographers were armed with large-format Series D and Speed Graphic cameras. They took little notice of the kid from Virginia with his inexpensive folding camera. I pretty much stayed in the background as I watched, listened, and absorbed the atmosphere.

Excursions were nothing new for the Rio Grande Southern, the first recorded trip having run from Durango

to Hesperus in late 1890. The track to Rico was completed the following year, and special trains brought officials, mining men, newspaper editors, and other nabobs to a grand "Silver Ball" on October 15, 1891. The RGS also ran special trains to carnivals and the annual Elks' Telluride-vs.-Ophir baseball game. For an 1897 tour around the "Narrow Gauge Circle" by the New Great Syndicate Show & Hippodrome Circus, the RGS converted an old boxcar into an "Elephant Car" by removing the roof. The Star Bloomer Girls Baseball Club played local teams in Telluride, Dolores, and Mancos in 1908,



while the Otto Floto Shows played the major towns along the line. These events all saw special excursion trains, a little added income for the railroad, and entertaining diversions for lineside residents.

Regular passenger trains were replaced by the famous Galloping Goose motor-car fleet during the 1930's. The Geese were a wonderful combination of Pierce-Arrow auto parts and master mechanic's imagination. The money-saving contraptions helped keep the penny-pinching Rio Grande Southern in operation for the next two decades, and the RGS managed to outlive most of its narrow-gauge contemporaries in large part owing to the gas-powered, silver-painted, tin-feathered Geese.

After World War II, John W. Maxwell, president of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, arranged for a chartered Galloping Goose trip over the RGS in

1946. This was the first of many notable "Rocky Club" excursions over the line. The trip left Ridgway with 20 of the faithful on July 12th.

That first excursion of 1946 required two days and three Geese. Goose No. 5 broke down the first day, and its replacement, Goose 3, soon joined the disabled ranks. Goose 4 finally brought the excursionists back to Ridgway, after a wild ride down the 4 percent grade from Lizard Head Pass in order to make a meet at Placerville. The special rolled to a stop near the Ridgway depot just in time, too—a wheel fell off the Goose as she came to a stop!

Another Rocky Club trip ran in 1947. On May 30, freshly painted 4-6-0 No. 20 departed for Dolores. The next day saw borrowed D&RGW 2-8-0 No. 319 in charge for the return trip, as the 20 had developed leaking flues. No. 20 was repaired and later went on to star in "A Ticket to Tomahawk," which was filmed on D&RGW's Silverton Branch. As the Emma Sweeny, the Schenectady-built Ten-Wheeler had her own stand-in. Twentieth Century-Fox Studio technicians built a beautiful replica of the engine and tender for scenes that

called for No. 20 to be hauled by horses between two disconnected sections of the movie's "Tomahawk & Western Railroad."

A thrilling introduction

On the bright spring 1949 day of my first RGS ride, the 74 blasted out of town and up toward Dallas Divide. Soon, she paused to build up steam after encountering the stiff 4 percent grade near Valley View. Rumors spread among the passengers that the newly acquired engine was a "poor steamer." Long-time engineman Leo Croonenbergs later said, "There's nothing wrong with her that good coal and good firing can't fix." We crested the 8989-foot summit at a walk, and the 37-inch-driven engine performed well for the next two days.

I rode in one of the train's two open-air D&RGW gondolas. Cinders, fresh mountain air, smoke, steam, and the wondrous views all added to the experience. Those not wishing to get a "snoot full of soot" rode aboard caboose 0400, a coach, or on the former business car *Edna*, which carried the club's drumhead.

On September 1, 1951, 2-8-0 No. 74 heads the last RGS fantrip up the Dallas Divide grade near Hagens. On the May 1947 trip (opposite page), the low-drivered Consolidation pauses for photos with Lizard Head Peak in the background, while at Ridgway, 2-8-2 455 stands amid other RGS relics.



After pausing at the Vance Junction coaling pockets, the train headed up the 4 percent Keystone Hill on the 9-mile-long Telluride Branch. A brief run down the 2-mile, freight-only spur to Pandora ended the day. Pandora, at over 9000 feet elevation, was the site of the Idarado Mining Company's mill and the terminus of aerial tramways that ran to the lofty mines clustered near the ghost town of Tomboy, 11,400 feet up.

We spent the night in the mining town of Telluride, many of us staying in the old Sheridan Hotel, where William Jennings Bryan made his famous "Cross of Gold" speech during the 1896 presidential campaign. Otto Mears and the entire San Juan region supported Bryan and his "free coinage of silver" platform. When Bryan lost the election, Mears left the San Juans a defeated and dejected man.

Our excursion train departed early the next morning for a scenic trip back to Vance Junction and then over the famous Ophir Loop, past Trout Lake and lofty Lizard Head, the crowning event of the entire trip. A rustic snowshed covered the mainline and wye

tracks atop the 10,250-foot-high pass. Engineer Bert Nash eased No. 74 around the wye and backed the consist downgrade about a mile, so that photographs of the train against a backdrop of Lizard Head Peak could be made. The peak itself had been part of the narrow-gauge line's logo since the 1890's. With everyone back on board, we headed north to Ridgway, tired but satisfied.

End of the line

One final Rocky Mountain Railroad Club excursion was made over the Rio Grande Southern on September 1-2, 1951. This trip followed the same route as the previous one and also used locomotive 74. This last train, while not carrying the silver and gold ores of a half-century before, was filled with people who had a special affection for this slim-gauge carrier.

We returned to Ridgway late on the afternoon of September 2. After dinner, I walked down to the weedgrown yards near the roundhouse for one last look. With the arrival of our special train, 60 years of RGS steam passenger service had ended in the fading light that

evening, although I did not realize it at the time.

The small yards were full of parts and pieces of discarded equipment. Rotary snowplow No. 2 sat rusting on a siding, clearly showing the damage from a 1949 boiler explosion—the road could not afford the \$2500 needed to rebuild her. With the loss of the rotary, the RGS was unable to keep the line open during much of the winter. What little mining traffic that remained was forced to use the highway. With the constant snow blockades, the Post Office Department canceled the railroad's mail contract. The handwriting was on the wall, and the last RGS train ran two days after Christmas 1951.

The Rio Grande Southern has been gone nearly 50 years, but its glory days live on for me in photographs and, best of all, memories. ■

MALLORY HOPE FERRELL is a former jet fighter pilot and international airline captain. He was a photographer for Life and has authored hundreds of articles and 14 hardcover railroad books including Silver San Juan: The Rio Grande Southern (Pruett Press, 1973).



PHILIP A. RONFOR



PHILIP A. RONFOR



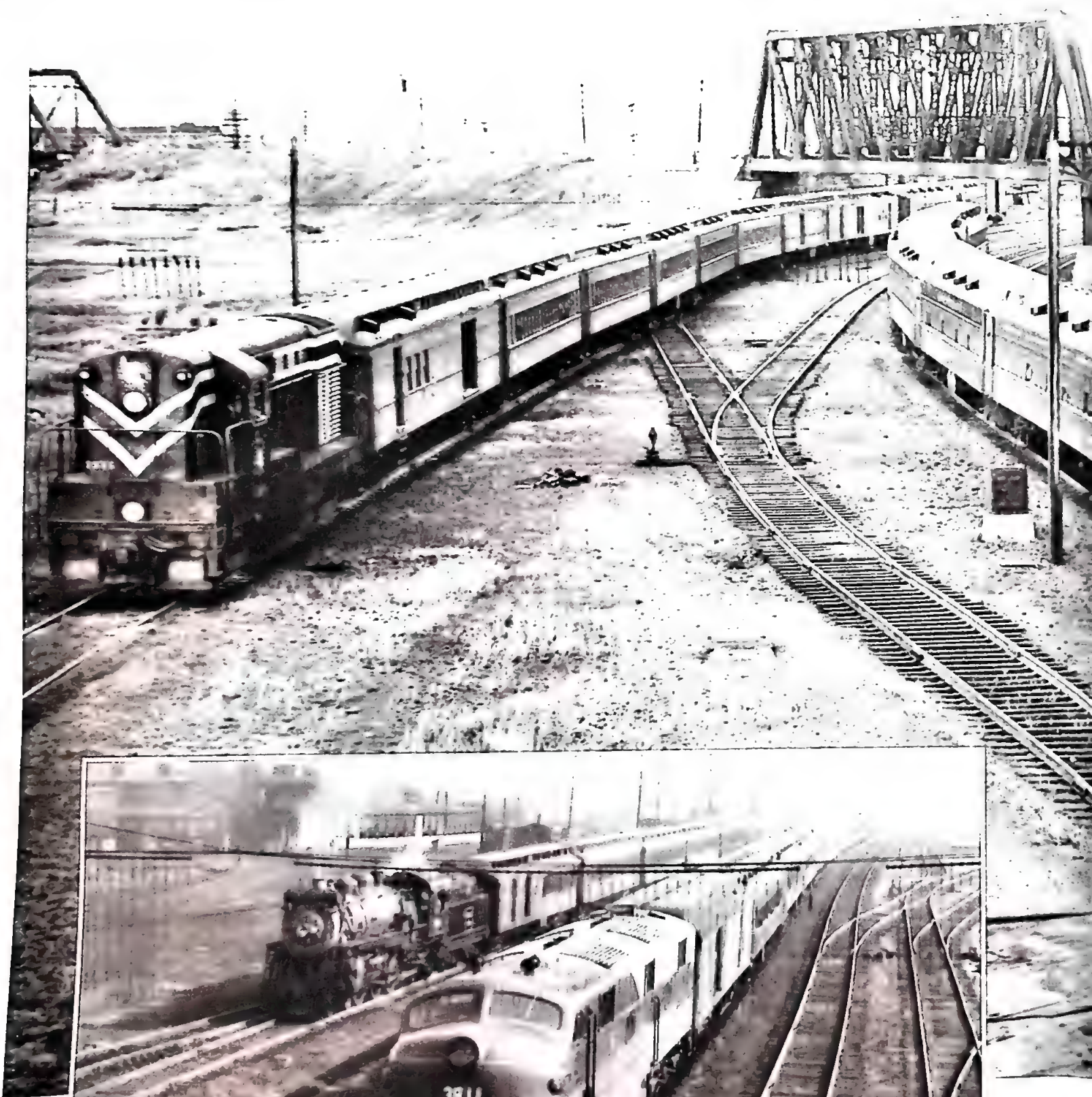
Northern Pacific 4-8-4 2654 rumbles over the big bridge at Valley City, N.Dak., with a westbound train. Built to replace a route that looped down into the Sheyenne River valley, the colossal span measures 3800 feet long and stands 154 feet high. Soo Line's main to Portal, N.Dak., passes under the trestle's east end.

Gallery

Photo Classics



LINN WESTCO



ALBERT G. HALE



JOHN F. ENDLER JR.

A mile out of Jersey City Terminal in July 1951, Central Railroad of New Jersey Camelback 4-6-0 786 passes Communipaw station with a commuter train while Fairbanks-Morse H16-44 1515 waits to shove empty coaches into the terminal. Three miles from Boston, two Boston & Maine trains pass East Somerville, Mass., on August 8, 1946. E7 3811 is on train 147 to Portland, Maine, via Dover, N.H., while Pacific 3664 heads local 241 to Portsmouth, N.H. At the time, both trains were carded out of North Station at 4:55 p.m.



WILLIAM P. PRICE PHOTO; AL CHIONE COLLECTION



E. B. KING JR. PHOTO; DAN POPE COLLECTION

Way up in the northeast corner of Maine, Bangor & Aroostook F3's 41 and 40 roll a freight past the wooden station platform at Caribou in spring 1960. The BAR ("B&A" to locals) completed dieselization in 1952 with a virtually all-EMD roster; a quarter-century later, train-watchers embraced the road for its late operation of F3's and BL2's.



A half-mile west of Ithaca, N.Y., on a cold morning in February 1941, Lehigh Valley 4-6-2 2097, recently streamlined by Otto Kuhler, hurries toward Buffalo with the road's nameless overnight train from New York. Fifteen cars back, another Pacific lends a hand, standard procedure for the stiff grades out of Ithaca.



DAVID R. CONNOR



ROBERT HALE



DAVID STRASSMAN



DONALD SIMS

Men at work: At Summit, Calif. (opposite page), long-time Santa Fe operator Chard Walker hands up orders for the crew of Union Pacific 5090, one of UP's 11 4-10-2's, in 1950. Ten years later (top), Katy men switch cars in the yard at Parsons, Kans., under overcast skies. Before mechanical refrigeration put them out of business (above), workers load ice into the bunkers of reefers at Coachella, Calif., near Indio on SP's Yuma Division. Clock Maintainer John Reich (right) checks a timepiece at AT&SF's Topeka (Kans.) shop. **1**



AT&SF

Diesels arrive on the Milwaukee Road

Remembering "Famous 15," its alter ego 14, and two special SW1's

By Jim Scribbins

I WAS FAMILIAR AT AN EARLY AGE with division operating timetables, "green signals," markers, "bumping," and many of the other "inside" items of railroading. But it was the arrival in late 1941 of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific's first two Diesel (the designation was capitalized at the time) passenger locomotives that transformed me from a kid growing up in a railroad family into a true railroad hobbyist. My first glimpse was of two-unit EMD E6 No. 15 leading a very long *Fast Mail and Express* 57 across a dimly lit street a few blocks out of the depot in Milwaukee.

I don't remember when I first saw the other half of the team, two-unit Alco DL109 No. 14, but it quickly became my favorite because of its Otto Kuhler-styled needle nose and flashier paint scheme. The Schenectady machine boasted a one-of-a-kind gray, orange, maroon, and yellow livery. This design lasted less than a year before it was sacrificed for 15's more utilitarian orange-and-gray, an only moderately successful attempt to match the color arrangement of the Milwaukee Road's streamlined steam locomotives.

As spring made outdoor activity more tolerable, I was normally at the depot in Milwaukee on weekend afternoons when the two internal-combustion machines would pass through within 45 minutes of each other. The 15 arrived first, pulling *Morning Hiawatha* 6, which had the extremely important duty of connecting at Chicago with principal trains to the east: Pennsy's *Liberty Limited* and *Detroit Arrow*, New York Central's *Twilight Limited*

and *James Whitcomb Riley*, and, particularly, B&O's *Capitol*, PRR's *Broadway*, and NYC's *20th Century* limiteds.

The 15 had its work cut out for it. Train 6, which usually ran 10 to 12 streamlined cars, was a very fast train. In 1941, for example, it was scheduled to cover the 420.8 miles from Minneapolis to Chicago in 6 hours 50 minutes, which averages to 61.6 mph including eight intermediate stops. En route, it had the second-fastest start-to-stop timing in the world, 58 minutes for the 78.3 miles between Sparta and Portage, Wis., or 81 mph (Burlington's *Morning Zephyr* 21 was the fastest, on its East Dubuque, Ill.-Prairie du Chien, Wis., leg). After a 6-hour rest in Chicago, the 15 would haul train 57 back to the Twin Cities, usually a 12- to 16-car consist of mostly conventional (i.e., not lightweight) cars including three working Railway Post Offices. Long intermediate pauses belied 57's swiftness, which approached that of the *Hiawathas* between station stops.

The 14, which turned out to be the one and only Alco road diesel Milwaukee Road ever acquired, had a task that almost equaled 15's. The Alco's day first involved pulling equally fast *Afternoon Hi* 101, often a 14-car train during World War II, to Minneapolis and starting back in less than an hour with overnight *Fast Mail* 56. In addition to hauling almost as much mail and express as 57, train 56 carried a sleeper and coaches, and en route at New Lisbon, Wis., it picked up two sleepers from 256 off the (Wisconsin River) "Valley Line," from the Wausau area.

The 15 seldom missed a trip. In fact, even after Milwaukee's 10 E7A's arrived after the war in 1946, the railroad kept its lone E6 assigned to 57 and 6 well into 1948. The 14 was good, but not as good as the 15. The Alco didn't always complete the cycle. One time, a single unit (I don't remember if it was "A" or "B"—the letter suffixes were not displayed in the number boxes yet) arrived in Milwaukee on train 23, the afternoon businessmen's train from Chicago, and was backed onto the depot turntable to be turned for *Chippewa* 14. I'd been invited into the cab for the 23-to-turntable-to-east end of depot maneuver. There was a difference between the throttles of E6's and DL109's. On La Grange products, the lowest notch position was "idle." The hostler backed onto the turntable, stopped, and moved the throttle to its lowest position. *Sputter, sputter, wheeze, glug*. The diesel motors went beyond "idle" to complete stop! Well, the unit was turned, but how did one restart it? After the two

What triggered the author to become a railroad hobbyist? Milwaukee Road's first diesel passenger locomotive, two-unit E6 No. 15, here ready to leave Milwaukee with *Fast Mail and Express* 57.



EDWARD J. KRUSCHKE



KENNETH ZURN; HAROLD A. EDMONSON COLLECTION



JIM SCRIBBINS

Observing E6 15 on train 6 at the Milwaukee depot in 1943 were four people then not yet known by the author: *Trains* Publisher Albert C. Kalmbach, standing with his two daughters, Kathlyn and (hidden by her dad) Elizabeth. Al's father, M.F. Kalmbach, is behind them, closest to the camera.

depot switchers finished working each end of 23, their enginemen came over to the Alco. There was much speculation, considerable button-pushing, trips into the engine room, and some cussing. Eventually, a mechanic from the shops arrived to solve things.

Besides the two twin-unit road passenger diesels in 1941, CMStP&P received 25 little EMD SW1 switchers during 1939-41. The first ones in Milwaukee were assigned to the Chestnut Street line, the route of the original La Crosse & Milwaukee that ran from the intersection of North 3rd Street and West Juneau (formerly Chestnut), just north of downtown, northwest to the North Milwaukee junction. The public knew it as the "Beer Line" because it

directly served the large Schlitz brewery, and had team tracks for the nearby Pabst and Blatz breweries. Humboldt Avenue was the operations center, with transfers running via North Milwaukee to and from CMStP&P's main yards near the shops in the Menomonee River valley southwest of downtown. Several other engines worked the breweries on the south portion of the line. The solid-black, 600 h.p. machines were welcome at Humboldt because about the only servicing they required was the replenishing of fuel oil, for which trucks were sent to Humboldt. Neighbors, though, complained about the noise of the little units' 567 engines.

The depot was assigned SW1's 1629 and 1630, which worked the west and east ends, respectively, and I became acquainted with them during visits to see the 14 and 15. Things had reached the point that I spent increasingly longer periods of time at the depot. One particularly hot summer afternoon, I was standing at 2nd Street, at the de-

The author preferred the fancier color scheme first applied to Alco 14, which lasted less than a year. By the time this postwar photo was taken at La Crosse, Wis., it wore colors identical to EMD 15's.

pot's east end. The 1630 was idling nearby, awaiting 23's arrival from Chicago. A voice boomed out: "Hey, kid. Come on up here," accompanied by a large wave from the engineer's cab window. Thus I met Roy Kelley, who for years was the regular afternoon engineman on the east end depot job. His first big task was switching the through cars from Chicago-Milwaukee 23 to the rear of "La Crosse 23," as the separate train was called for the division on which it originated. The train was affectionately known to its regular riders as the "Cannonball," a suburban train running all the way to Madison but whose most important function was to carry downtown Milwaukee professional people to their residences in the lake country around Oconomowoc.

Throughout the evening there was a steady procession of trains needing attention, culminating in the big event of the night, shoving *Fast Mail and Express* 57. This was a big train, primarily heavyweight equipment including working RPO's, express messenger cars, and mail storage cars. One express car toward the rear end had seating for the conductor and brakemen, with side windows and a small door for observing the train en route. At the extreme rear were express cars to be left at New Lisbon for "Valley" train 215. Sometimes the train's markers rested east of Plankinton Avenue, two blocks and more from the depot.



PHILIP C. JOHNSON

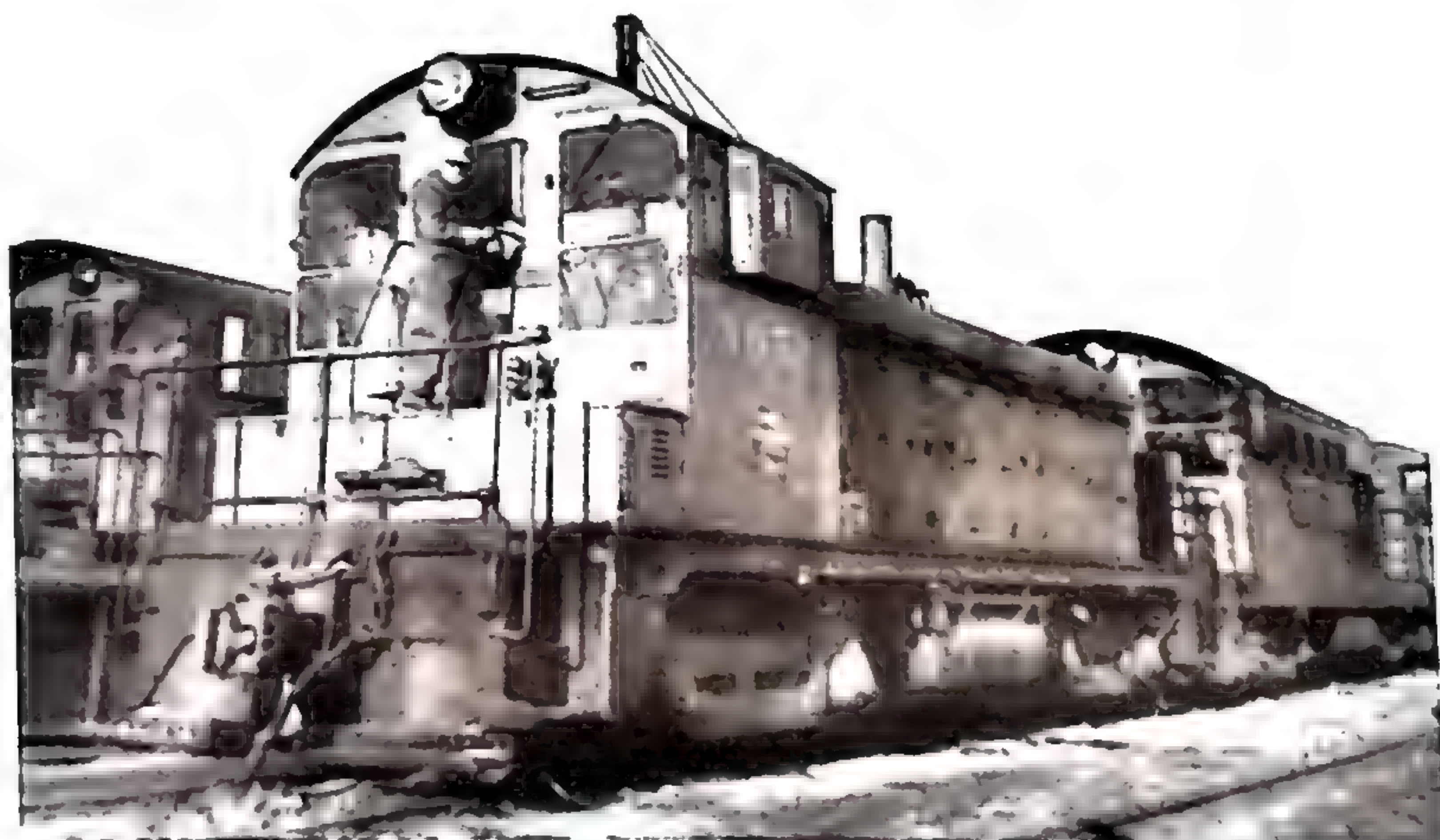
Milwaukee Road's first FT, four-unit No. 40, painted gray and orange with yellow striping, whines east in dynamic braking down Plummer Creek canyon near Pedee, Idaho, on June 12, 1947.

On the head end, the sturdy 15 would protrude into the intersection of 5th and Clybourn streets. There was a sharp curve at 2nd Street, and often the third RPO extended into that curve. The units and the first two cars would be on a gradual curve constituting the west end of the depot platforms. There were also curves at 6th and 8th streets as the main line attained an east-west orientation. After attaching the Valley cars, a switchman would disconnect the air hose, but Kelley's 1630 would remain coupled to the rear car. When two long whistle blasts echoed back from the E6, he'd open his throttle all the way, and the little goat would struggle mightily. About midway through the depot, the 4000 h.p. EMD tandem up front would gain its footing, a switchman would "lift the pin," and 57 would pull away while Kelley quickly braked his SW1 to a stop. His work was done, but the 1630 had plenty to do during the night with the *Pioneer Limited*, *Olympian*, and other trains.

The Milwaukee terminal was not the first location to receive Milwaukee Road's modern yard power. In 1929-30, Whitcomb had delivered two 80-ton gas-electric center-cab switchers, which were rebuilt to diesel-electrics by the Rochelle (Ill.) builder in 1941 (they went to the U.S. Government in 1944). Two 1000 h.p. EMD NW2's and three "high hood" Alco switchers, two of 660 h.p. and one of 1000 h.p., had been de-



JAMES A. BLAKELY



TRAINS: JOE O'HEARN

livered along with the first three SW1's in 1939, and 35 more yard engines would come from five builders the following year. In spring 1940, SW1's were assigned to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Green Bay and Portage, Wis. Before the

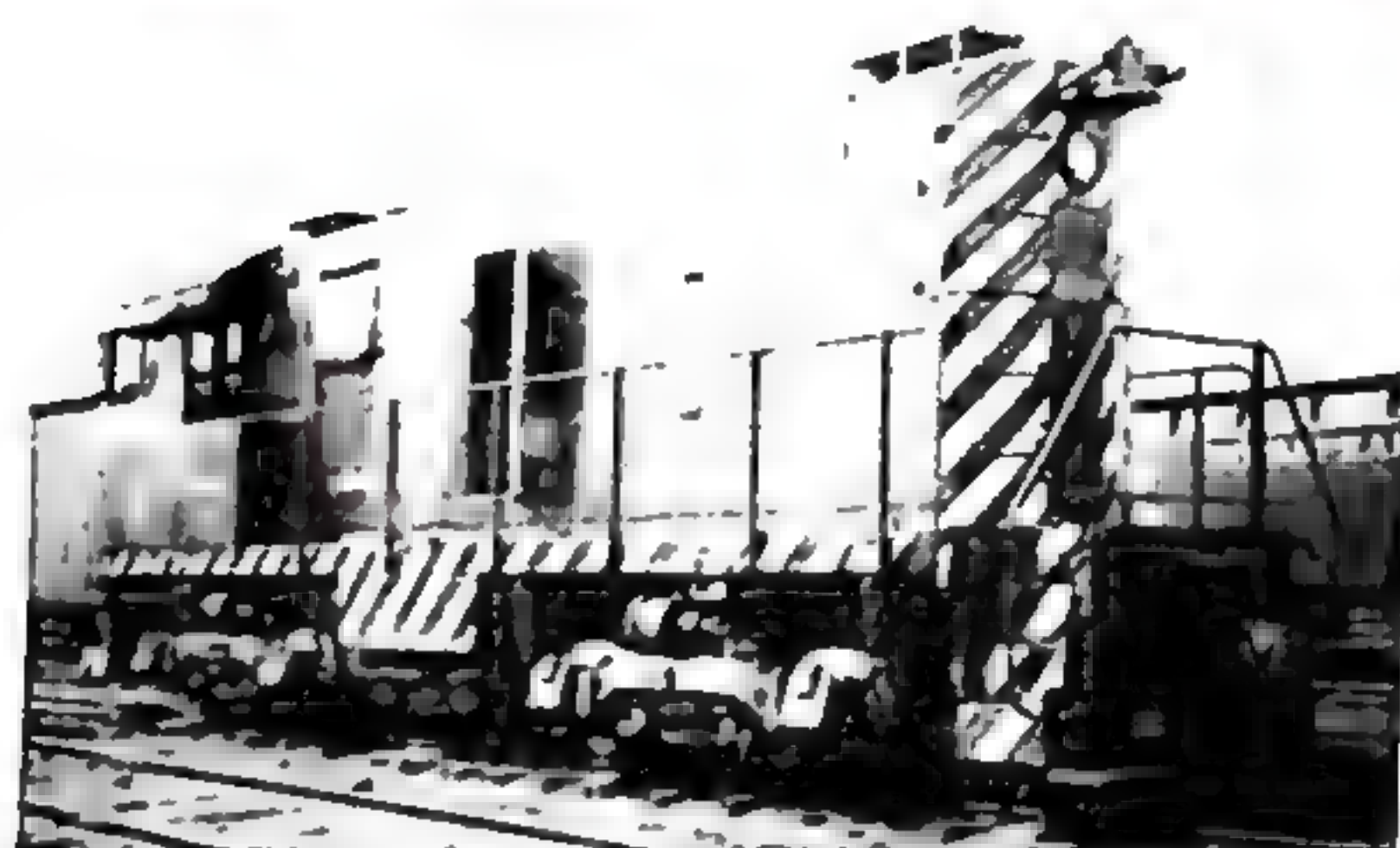
By 1947, gray and orange had replaced black on switchers; SW1 1627, a sister to the two the author knew so well in Milwaukee, pulled cars from Chicago Union Station. Humboldt Avenue yard was the home for "Beer Line" units, which on January 17, 1948, included NW2 1651 and several FM's.



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KEITH D. PREGLER



CMSTP&P: HARVEY UECKER

From top: Like many roads, CMSTP&P sampled diesels of various builders. Replacement Alco RS1's 1676 and 1677 took over the east end of Pig's Eye Yard in St. Paul in 1943, displacing four 2-8-2's. The road had 12 44-tonners from three builders; Whitcomb 1699 was at Cologne, Minn., in December 1941. Alco HH660 1600 worked at Dubuque, Iowa; it and Baldwin V01000 1680 were among 35 CMSTP&P diesels built in 1940.

year was over, 2 360 h.p. 44-ton units, 24 switchers of 600 or 660 h.p., and 9 larger 1000 h.p. switchers were bought variously from Alco, Baldwin, Electro-Motive, and General Electric. They were assigned to, among other places, Chicago; Milwaukee; Council Bluffs, Perry, and Sioux City, Iowa; Aberdeen, S.Dak.; Minneapolis-St. Paul; and Seattle and Tacoma, Wash. All sites required new fuel oil storage tanks.

Milwaukee Road's first two "road-switcher" diesels (a term not in use until later), 1000 h.p. machines numbered 1678-1679 and later designated by the builder as RS1's, arrived from Alco in late '41. They were put to work between Spokane and Metaline Falls and Marango, Wash. In 1942, the pair was requisitioned by the government for use in the war effort (along with the other 11 existing siblings from Bay Line, Rock Island, Susquehanna, and Tennessee Coal & Iron). In 1943, CMSTP&P (and the other four "volunteers") received replacements, numbered 1676-1677, and it would buy three more RS1's, in 1950.

November 8, 1941, was a significant date for CMSTP&P as its first road freight diesel, four-unit, 5400 h.p. EMD FT No. 40, entered service. The 40 could handle the same tonnage that the railroad's electric freight motors would bring into Avery, Idaho, from the Rocky Mountain Division or into Othello, Wash., from the Coast Division, and move the trains across the "Idaho Division," or "electrification gap," about 5 hours faster than the previously used 2-6-6-2's. In summer '43, a second FT, No. 41, went to the Idaho, which by then had acquired full division status.

Six more such machines, 42-47, were added during 1944, and five more, 35-39, in 1945. (Each quartet used letter suffixes; the cab units were A and D, the booster units B and C.) The first use of FT's on CMSTP&P's "Lines East" (of the Missouri River) commenced between Milwaukee and Kansas City.

Milwaukee Road 1802 was the world's first Fairbanks-Morse diesel locomotive, accepted by the railroad in a ceremony at the builder's plant in Beloit, Wis., on August 8, 1944. Styled by noted industrial designer Raymond Loewy, the 1000 h.p. switcher quickly went to work pulling "beer trains" between Humboldt Avenue yard and the Menomonee valley. CMSTP&P was well satisfied with it, and eventually would own more than 160 "Fairbanks" diesel-electric locomotives, more than any other railroad except the Pennsylvania.

Like many railroads of the time, Milwaukee Road seemed to sample just about every builder and model of diesel by the mid-'40's, and the variety expanded in the immediate post-World War II years. But those early experiences with the two passenger engines and the depot SW1's helped me form a lifelong interest in the internal combustion machines of what would turn out to be my career employer. **I**

JIM SCRIBBINS, who retired in 1985 after a 37-year career with CMSTP&P in its passenger, freight sales, and public relations departments, lives with his wife, Barbara, in West Bend, Wis. He has written four books, on the Hiawathas, the C&NW 400's, and other Milwaukee Road topics, plus numerous magazine articles.



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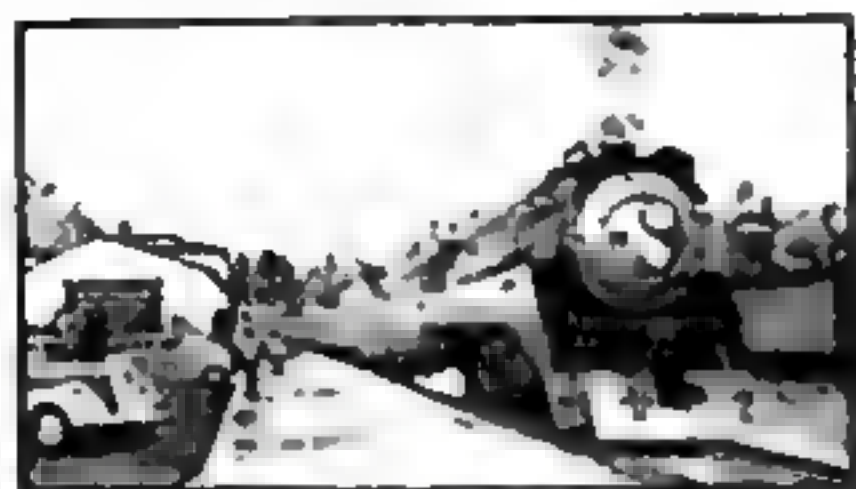


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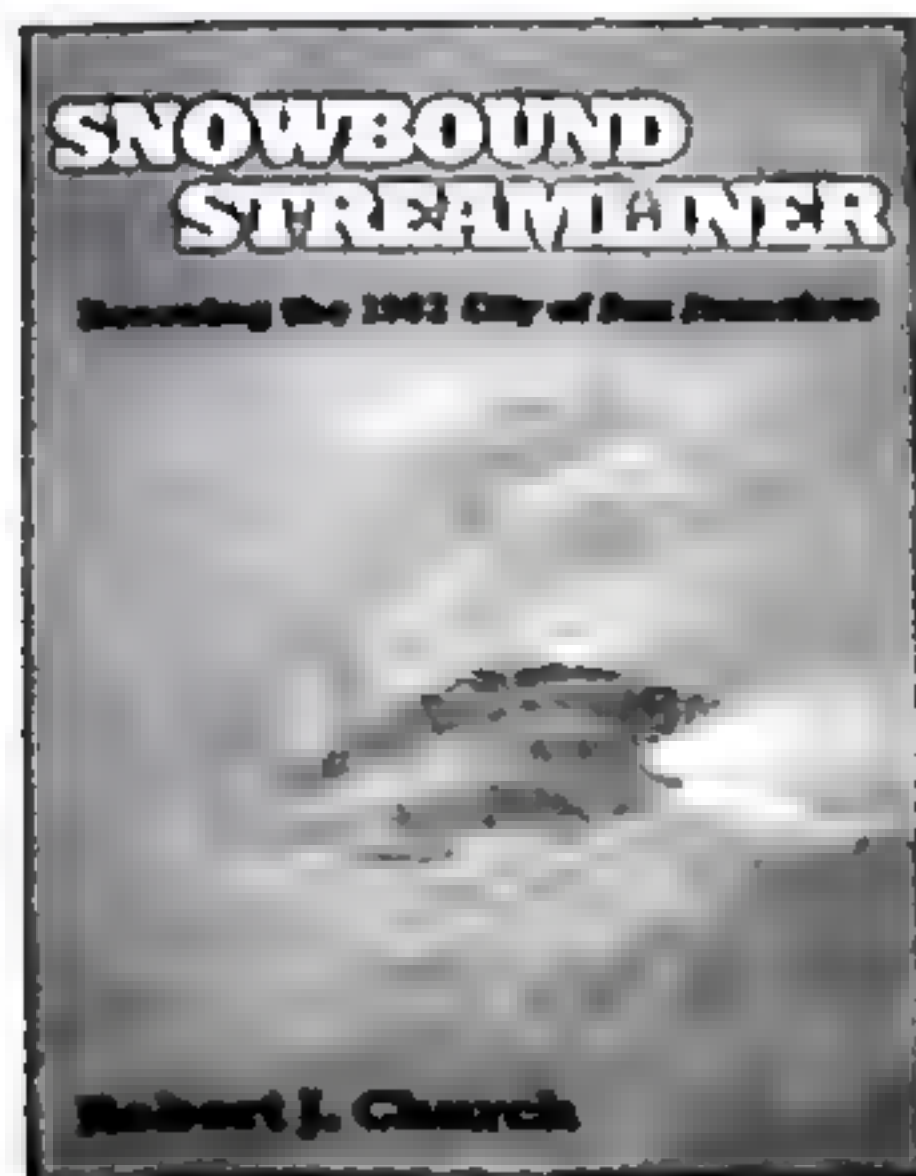
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Steam stronghold

In the late '50's, the big show still played on CN in Ontario

Photos by Philip R. Hastings

AFTER DIESELS had nearly taken over in the U.S., steam was still abundant in Canada, with engines big and small working virtually all types of services. Photographer

Phil Hastings especially loved the little Moguls and Ten-Wheelers that plied the branch lines out of the likes of Palmerston and Lindsay, Ontario. On his trips north to see them, he stopped several times in and around Hamilton, Ont. Then as now, the mainline junctions north of the city—Hamilton Junction, Bayview, and Burlington—were busy places, seeing up to 85 Canadian National trains a day. And as late as the start of 1958, one-third of these were steam-powered. When Phil Hastings died in 1987, he left behind many great photos, including the views of CN mainline steam presented here. On these opening two pages, S-1-f Mikado 3457 helps U-2-c Northern 6145 move a Hamilton-Toronto freight through Bayview in May 1958.





RIGHT: After backing into Hamilton to make a station stop, K-5-a Hudson 5702 pulls past Bayview Junction with London-Toronto train 80 in May 1958. The lanky 4-6-4's olive-green boiler jacket is clean except for an alkali water stain dripping down from her pop valve. Built in 1930 for Toronto-Montreal service, the five K-5-a's were CN's only Hudsons.

FAR RIGHT: In May 1958, U-2-g Northern 6232 swings through Hamilton Junction with a passenger extra headed for Hamilton. Visible in the left of the photo is the junction's west wye track. Like 6232, all but 5 of CN's 160 4-8-4's were 73-inch-driven dual-service machines.

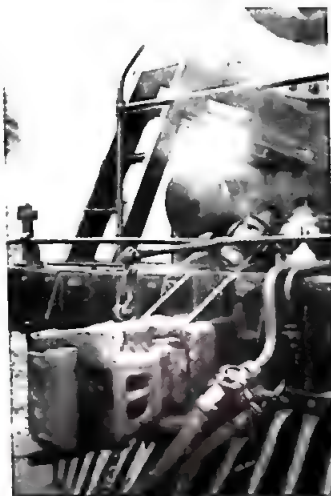
MIDDLE RIGHT: High and dry in the crossing watchman's tower at Burlington, Hastings caught the daily-except-Sunday "switcher" passing in heavy rain on its way from Hamilton Yard to Mimico Yard west of Toronto. Elderly N-4-a Consolidation 2647 was scrapped the month after this September 1957 photo.

RIGHT: Train 660-661, a classic little branchline passenger service running 91.5 miles from Hamilton to Allandale, Ont., pulls out of Burlington. Usually handled by a gas-electric car, the schedule is covered by J-4-e Pacific 5125 and two cars on this snowy March 1957 day.





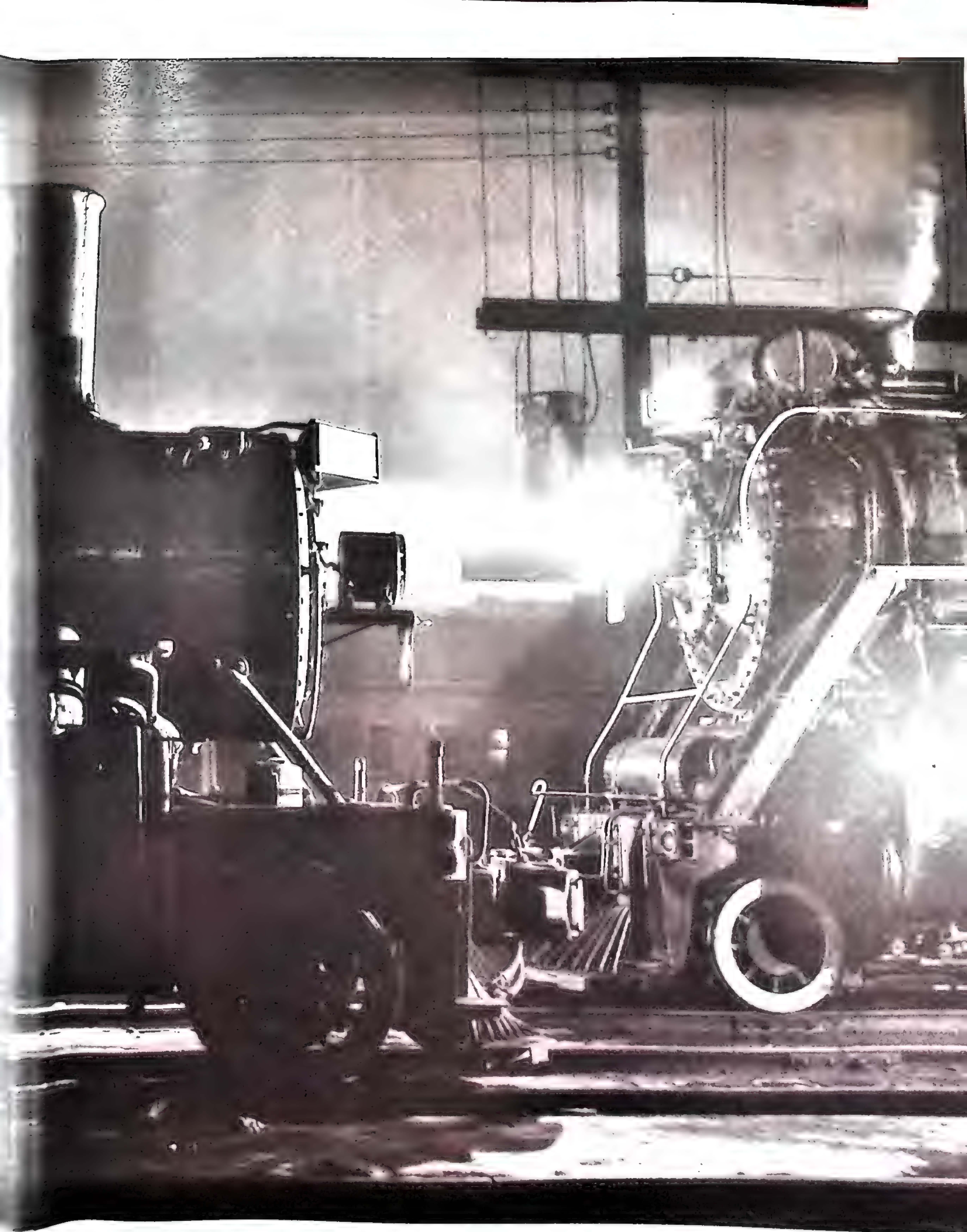




PILOT DUTY: In a series of views at Hamilton Junction from a day in May 1958, S-1-g Mikado 3509 works as a "pilot" engine, helping freights climb the hill out of Hamilton. Above, she stands on the west wye, waiting to follow a train down into Hamilton. Opposite page and far left this page, she's seen coming and going ahead of two F7's on an eastbound. At left, two marker lamps, to be hung on the rear of 3509's tender when she's running light or pushing a train, are stashed on the engine's pilot beam.

HAMILTON YARD: Two miles from Hamilton Junction, the steam-servicing facilities at Hamilton Yard were still active in December 1958. At right, a hostler fills the tender of P-5-b 0-8-0 8305 at dusk. Below, hostlers take a break after their evening chores, which included bringing U-2-g 6234 into the round-house for the night. On the opposite page, U-2-g 6226's headlight pierces the night, while E-10-a Mogul 83 stands cold, awaiting retirement. 







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The Way It Was

I rode the Crescent—for free!

AMONG THE RANKS of great passenger trains you will find such historic names as the *20th Century Limited*, the *Broadway Limited*, the *Super Chief*, and others. One of the "others" would definitely be the Southern Railway's *Crescent Limited*—in its final form, a streak of stainless steel that provided the traveling public with comfort, hospitality, speed, and safety between New York and New Orleans on a daily basis. All-Pullman between New York and Atlanta, the *Crescent* (trains 37 and 38) was one of the most prestigious passenger trains in the South. I always thought that Southern's finest was way out of my league, but thanks to the U.S. Government and an accident, I actually got to ride it when it was still in its prime—for free!

In June 1960, I completed my military career at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C. During this time Uncle Sam paid your fare for the trip home when you left the service. Instead of riding with three of my friends by auto, I decided to let the military pay for my ticket to Danville, Va., where my mom and dad would meet me.

My plan was to ride Southern's *Carolina Special* (train 27) from Columbia to Spartanburg, S.C., then the *Piedmont Limited* (34) up the Atlanta-Washington main from Spartanburg to Danville.

Of course, I arrived at Columbia's majestic Union Station an hour early hoping to see a freight or two before train time. Then, right on time, I heard the whistling of the *Special*.

As the train—two F units and eight cars—approached the depot, an automobile tried to beat it to a road crossing, and lost. Fortunately, the *Special* was traveling only 15 or 20 mph and did not derail from the impact (the car was wrecked, but the driver was not seriously injured). But the bad news for me was that my train was delayed almost an hour, putting in serious jeopardy my plans to make a 30-minute connection with the *Piedmont* in Spartanburg. You guessed it, by the time we arrived in Spartanburg, train 34 was long gone. Now what could I do? Mom, Dad, two aunts, and two dogs would be expecting me to be on the *Piedmont* when it arrived in Danville.

Being a railfan, I was familiar with the schedule of all Southern passenger trains and knew the *Crescent* was due in Spartanburg within the hour. But train 38 was all-Pullman, and I held a coach ticket. I talked to the station agent in his office (a veteran of the Korean War) and told him of my plight.

Three years after Tillotson rode the *Crescent*, he photographed it heading north at Greer, S.C.



CURT TILLOTSON JR.

When he saw me, a young soldier, in uniform, with a most worried expression on his face, he told me that he would talk to the *Crescent's* conductor in an attempt to get me home—an act of kindness I will never forget.

The *Crescent*, pulled by two super-clean E8A's (my favorite passenger diesels) and an equally clean consist of stainless-steel cars, rolled into Spartanburg on time. I waited anxiously while the agent conferred with the conductor. After a minute or so the conductor motioned me to come forward and then told me that he had an empty roomette available as far as Salisbury, N.C. I could use the roomette to Salisbury and then ride in the diner to Danville. After a quick call home to tell my family of the change in plans, I stepped aboard the train, the fabled *Crescent Limited*. I was truly in heaven, and ready for an adventure that would remain with me for the rest of my life.

Not only was I riding the *Crescent*, I was actually in a roomette as well. I pushed every button on the wall panel. Indeed, the porter came to my room twice. (I believe he knew this was my first experience in luxury rail accommodations, since, on his second visit, he had an all-knowing smile on his face.) I used the sink—and other similar appliances—and, while all of this “exploration” was going on, I also kept a journal, listing all the trains we met on Southern's hot Washington-Atlanta double-track main line (12 southbound freights and 2 passenger runs). What enjoyment!

Once we arrived in Salisbury, the conductor found me and told me that he had placed the passengers who were scheduled to occupy “my” roomette in another part of the train, so I could remain in my car all the way to Danville. I was getting hungry, so upon hearing this wonderful news I left my military bag in the roomette and headed for the diner, two cars ahead.

After entering the beautiful “restaurant on wheels,” I looked at the menu. Once I checked my finances, I discovered I could afford a B.L.T. sandwich and Pepsi—a meal fit for a king. Indeed, it was one of the most delicious suppers I ever had, and I ate my food slowly, enjoying every bite, while trav-

eling between 70 and 80 mph.

I finished my repast as we pulled out of Greensboro, N.C. Knowing the next stop would be Danville, I headed back to my car to retrieve my bag and be ready to leave the train. I went back two cars but could not find my roomette. I walked through another Pullman—nothing! I stopped a porter and asked him where my car was located. He told me six cars had been added to the train behind the diner in Greensboro. While the *Crescent* rolled north, I hiked south looking for my car. Just as I found it, the conductor announced, “Danville, next stop!” I had walked nearly the entire way (so it seemed) between Greensboro and Danville in the opposite direction from No. 38's route!

Once we stopped and I departed the train, I discovered that there were 12 cars between me and Danville's station—more walking! Finally I found my family, and my day's adventure came to a most outstanding end, one that simply reinforced what had been among the most memorable in my life.

As we headed for the family car, I heard a roar and felt the ground rumble. I looked back at the station and saw five F7's heading south, shouting to high heaven with a sound that only wide-open F7's could make, with over a mile of tonnage tied to their tail, trying to build up momentum in order to make it over Cemetery Hill—the ruling grade south out of Danville.

What a fitting way to end this glorious day, the day I rode the *Crescent*.

—Curt Tillotson Jr.

A little nervous calculating

ON THE NORFOLK & WESTERN, when you qualified for passenger service as a fireman or engineer, the Road Foreman of Engines' office put a “p” by your name on the seniority roster. This told the world that you had the right to warm the appropriate seat-box on a locomotive on any passenger train on your division.

Hank Kinzel went firing on the N&W's Radford Division in the early 1950's. He'd put in some time working in the passenger station at Roanoke until the firing job came open, but when the opportunity knocked, Hank

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The Way It Was



ROBERT HALE

threw over the ticket stamp and swapped it for a pair of bib overalls and a scoop shovel, or the controls of the Standard, Duplex, and Berkley stokers then used on N&W power. And when he'd accumulated the necessary six months experience, they put the "p" by his name on the roster. Hank was proud of that "p."

It happened that the fireman's job on train 45, the westbound *Tennessean* bound for Bristol and Memphis (via Southern Railway), was vacant one fine day when Hank was in town, and he was called for it. Hank always thought 45 and 46, its eastbound counterpart, were the flagships of the Bristol Line fleet, with their stainless-steel cars. And here he was, going to fire the *Tennessean's* J class 4-8-4 the 151 miles to Bristol—his first passenger trip.

Now, Hank doesn't mind admitting that he sort of strutted down the station platform to the engine with his engineer (whom we'll call Sam Roberts because that was not his name); several folks he'd worked with at the station were on hand, and he wanted to make sure they saw him climb up on that big 4-8-4.

Now, for those not familiar with N&W's Bristol Line, there is a long straight stretch through a little town called Atkins, which is just east of Marion, Va. Bristol Line folks all knew Atkins; if you could run fast anywhere,

Despite relatively small drivers—just 70 inches in diameter—N&W's J-class 4-8-4's could really fly.

you could run fast there. Hank had fired Y-6 2-8-8-2's on freights through Atkins at speeds much higher than their designers had intended—he knew the road.

Let's let him tell what came next:

"We were going through Atkins, laying 'em down, and Sam hollered over and asked me if I knew how fast we were going. I said I had no idea—I wasn't familiar with the engine. He waved me over, and I looked at the General Electric speedometer needle bouncing on 90 mph.

"I did a little calculating on my way back to my seat. I subtracted the 65 mph speed limit from the speedometer reading. And then I subtracted the 35 mph limit on the curve that I knew was at the east end of Marion.

"And then I thought that if Sam doesn't know where he is, I'm just going to sit down over here, mind my own business, and *hold on*.

"But then Sam started setting the air, and we started slowing down.

"When we got into the curve, I went over and looked at the speedometer, and the needle was right on 35.

"Sam looked up at me with a big grin on his face and said 'you thought I wasn't going to make it, didn't you?'

"I didn't tell him that if he didn't

make it I wasn't going to either, and if we turned over, we'd turn over on my side."

Yep, it made a difference which side, whether or not your casket was open at the funeral.

—Ed King

No one dared look

BACK IN THE 1930's, a friend named C. J. Regensburger was attending Simon Gratz High School at 18th and Hunting Park Avenue in Philadelphia. The windows of certain classrooms on the west end of the school building afforded a view of the Reading Company's main passenger route out of town. For some boys, the usual practice in these classrooms was to crane one's neck and keep tabs on passing trains while paying less attention to such unimportant happenings as the teacher's lessons.

The school was located just south of the Wayne Junction station—deep in electrified suburban territory—so the trains of greatest interest were the steam-powered expresses running to and from New York and Bethlehem, Pa. Finally there came a day when a crucial test was being given, and no one dared to steal even a glance out the window. The time was shortly after the hour, and a fast-moving New York express was heard approaching. She came and went, the sound died away, and all eyes stayed glued to the blackboard and exam papers.

Then came the voice of the male teacher making an unexpected announcement: "Engine 109 and four cars!" Nothing more was said.

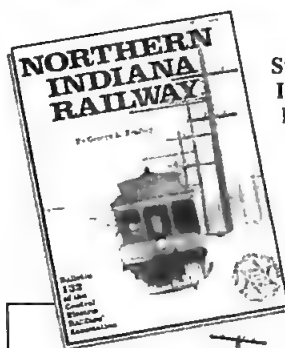
—Bert Pennypacker

At Grandmother's

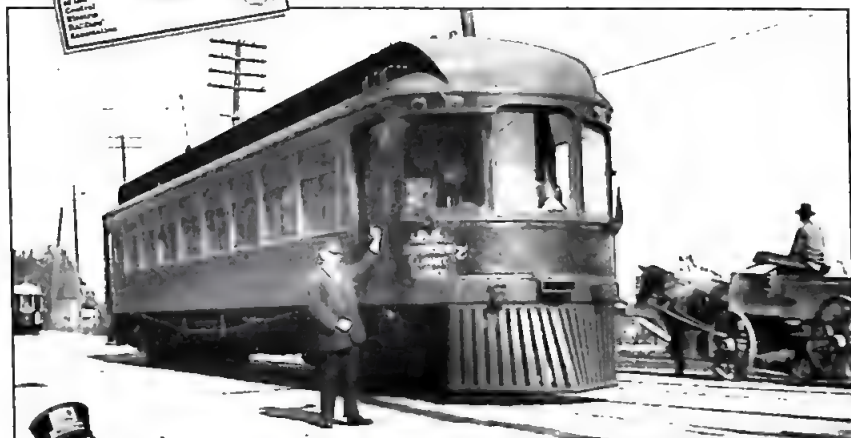
A FEW DAYS after my grandmother passed away, I was printing in the darkroom when I got the impulse to find and print the two images found on the next page. For a visit to Grandmother's house in Selmer, Tenn., also meant a visit to the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio (and tenant Illinois Central) six blocks away. Selmer's attraction, beyond my grandmother's strawberry cake, was EMD power—black IC GP9's, black-and-white GM&O

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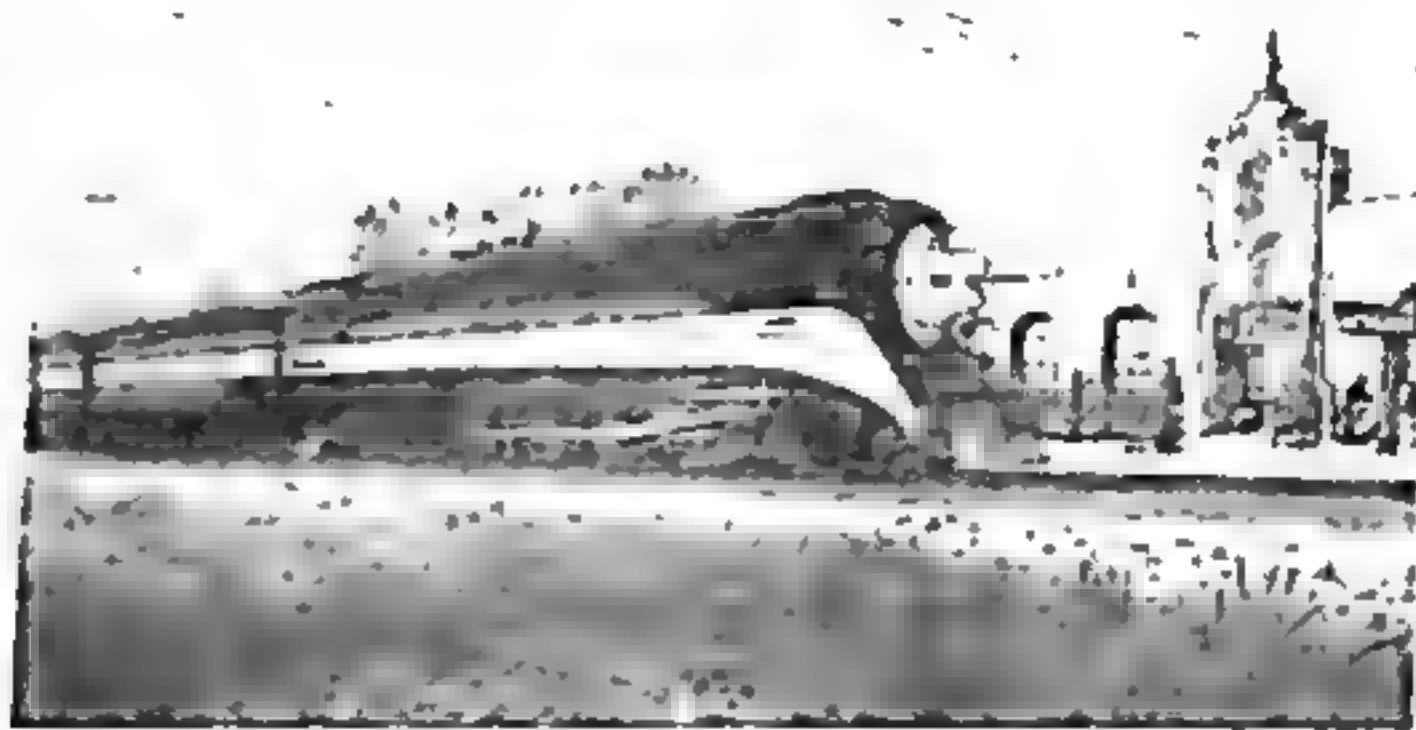
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The Way It Was

GP30's and GP35's, and red-and-white SD40's. It sounds strange today, seeking out SD40's as a change from Tennessee Central's all-Alco fleet in my hometown of Cookeville, Tenn.

Lacking a driver's license was no handicap for this teenage railfan in 1968, as the six blocks could be covered easily even on the hottest of afternoons. There, the gray station would offer some shade to stand in. When on duty, the agent, Mr. Case, would interrupt his work long enough to give me a line-up. GM&O Northern Division employees' timetable listed two freights of each carrier in each direction, but some ran in two sections, and there were extras. While not a "Hot Spot," Selmer was a place to see some fast freights scream by.

But the *pièce de résistance* was the early evening southbound passage of IC's every-other-day *City of Miami*. Here was a class train: two E units, a combine (no head-end junk), coaches, a diner, sleepers, a dome car, and a round-end observation—all in IC's orange-and-chocolate livery—a split rail

on the nose, and for purists, a green diamond on the tail. She was a sprinter, too, carded to cover the 51 miles on the GM&O between Perry (south of Jackson) and Ruslor Junction (north of Corinth, Miss.) in 53 minutes.

On Tuesday, June 18, 1968, I took a crack at photographing the *City*. I settled my early dinner while walking to the tracks. I cleared the right-of-way of litter and took a position near the "X" I had scratched in the ground marking the best spot to shoot No. 53 coming and going. I unfolded my Kodak Anastigmat, top shutter speed 1/100th second. A camera that had blurred a rambling TC freight was about to be asked to stop IC's premier Florida train. Air horns to the north announced the *City's* approach. In a moment she streamed around the curve into view, blasting for the U.S. Highway 45 crossing. *Click.*

Rapid film advance was still three years away for me, so I laboriously wound the 620 film, watching the back-

Kodak Anastigmat camera and Verichrome Pan film capture IC's *City of Miami* at Selmer, Tenn.



RICHARD A. POLK

ing paper through the little red window on the camera. 5 - - - V-E-R-I-C-H-R—God, here comes the dome car—O-M-E P-A-N—here's the obs—6. Aim, Click! Seconds later, the *City of Miami* was out of sight. I could hear horns for another crossing south of town, then she was gone until Thursday. Then it was back to Grandmother's for a piece of that strawberry cake.

The *City of Miami* died April 30, 1971, with the coming of Amtrak. My grandmother, Rosa Feik, died August 30, 1990. R.I.P. —Richard A. Polk

Rough handling

MY FATHER, Richard Henderson, was employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad as a shop clerk in the motive-power department at Toledo, Ohio, from 1901 through 1955. He told me the following story, and I will never forget it.

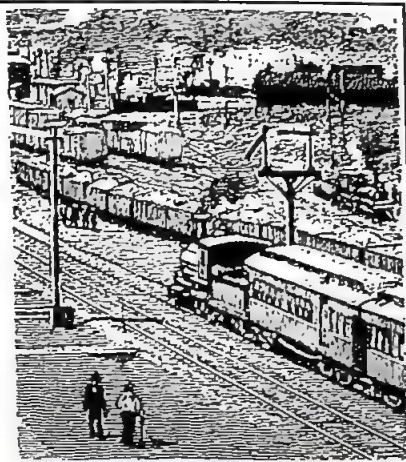
During World War II, troop trains were given rights over virtually every other train on the road. Such was the case early one morning with west-bound train 69, the New York-Detroit *Red Arrow*. The train was being handled by a K4s Pacific, as usual, and had to take siding somewhere east of Toledo to meet an eastbound troop train. Aboard the *Red Arrow* this day was a prominent personality, Eugene Ormandy, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Mr. Ormandy was regarded as the best in his business, and the PRR, a key patron of the Orchestra, took great pride in having him ride its trains. Needless to say, Mr. Ormandy was given the best of treatment.

This day, he was on his way to conduct a performance in Detroit. Well, when that troop train cleared the siding switch, it seems that the *Red Arrow*'s hogger was anxious to make up lost time, and he widened on that K4's throttle too quickly. And wouldn't you know it . . . just at that moment, Mr. Ormandy was getting ready to shave. As he prepared to perform the first stroke with his razor, the train's slack ran out . . . and Mr. Ormandy slashed his cheek from ear to chin!

Later that day, everybody from the president of the railroad to the engineer on the *Red Arrow*, from section

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The Way It Was

foremen to the Toledo road foreman of engines, heard about Mr. Ormandy's accident. It was never to be repeated!

—Robert Henderson,
as told to Charles H. Geletzke Jr.

Of trusting mothers and hot summer days

MY PARENTS believed in giving their children every opportunity to read, which included regular visits to the local library, situated in the small town of Carbondale, Pa. To a young train-watcher in the early '70's, the biweekly library trips presented opportunities to see Delaware & Hudson trains. At our house just outside of Jermyn, we could only hear them. One hot August afternoon, another literary excursion was due. That day's trip came with a twist: my mother and sisters were going to shop in Jermyn first, and then proceed north to Carbondale.

An idea came to me, which I proposed to my mother: if dropped off in Jermyn, I could walk north along the D&H tracks, and meet the rest of the family in Carbondale at the Belmont Street crossing at a certain time. I'd walked the line several times with my older brother, but I still wonder what thoughts ran through my mother's mind as she looked at me. She knew I had enjoyed train-watching from my eagerness to accompany my brother on his sojourns, and knew the alternative for me was to walk around a supermarket and clothing store with three sisters, no bargain for an 11-year-old boy. Her affirmative reply to my plea was a blessing—my first solo trip.

Dropped off at trackside with the words "Be careful!" ringing in my ears, I surveyed the situation. The searchlight signal at milepost A181 (Albany, 181 light-years away in my young mind) was green, its normal aspect. A southbound could be approaching, but to find out meant a quarter-mile hike south to the next signal, and my objective was to head north. Heat shimmered from the rails, the *clunks* of their expansion and the smell of creosote conspiring to make me forget the oppression of 90-degree sunshine.

Plodding around the curve leading to the interlocking plant at MF Cabin,



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From the publishers of

ClassicTrains

I peered intently along the one-mile tangent north, watching for the lit signals which would portend a freight. The three-light northbound set was dark, normal aspect also. It would light up only for a southbound when it entered the interlocker's limits. Cinders and the roadbed of a former second track, remnants of busier days, made the walk easier. An occasional broken coupler knuckle told of earlier efforts to conquer the Ararat Summit grade.

As I neared the interlocking plant, the sound of airhorns drifted through the air. The southbound set of signals showed high-green, meaning a southbound on the straight route through the plant. Soon three GE U30C's came into view, followed by over 100 cars, including a string of D&H ilmenite hoppers, with the unusual yellow paint scheme and lettering. The red extended-vision caboose brought me back to reality, and the rest of my hike was uneventful. In Carbondale, the signals below Belmont Street displayed approach for both tracks, a sure sign of no immediate action. With over an hour until rendezvous time with my family, I ducked into the cool library, selected my books, and returned to the tracks.

The Carbondale freight station had been torched several years earlier, but the freight platform remained, a perfect vantage point for the railfan, as it presented a clear view of signals in both directions. A glance south revealed a red-over-red on the northbound track, with a twin horizontal sealed-beam headlight underneath. Even this neophyte knew this meant a C628! The northbound signal showed nothing lined up, so I hiked south. As I came closer, a matched set of four of the big Alcos could be seen. In my excitement at discovering this, I ran up to the side of the train, where I found a crewman peering under the front truck of the lead unit. The kindly crewman sauntered over, and after asking where I was from, explained that the lead unit had experienced a shorted traction-motor cable, and what with a heavy train (8000-plus tons and 100-plus cars), required a relief engine before making a stab at the Ararat climb.

His train was NE-84, the "Northeast Alphabet Route" run-through from

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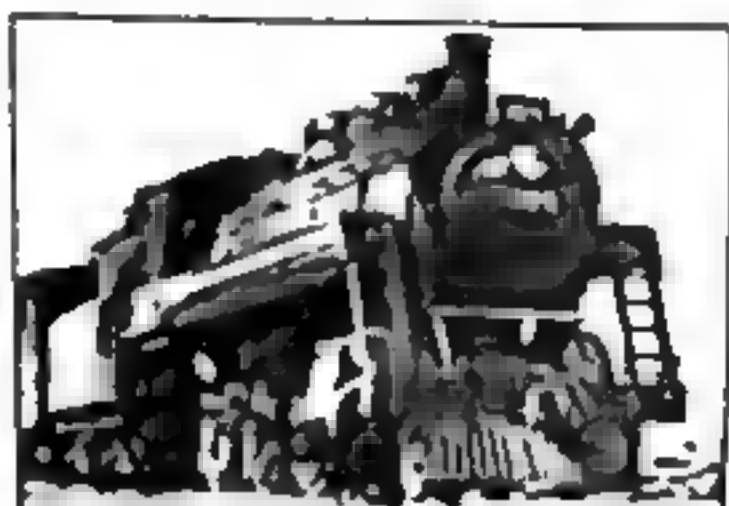
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The Way It Was



JIM SHAUGHNESSY

D&H's big Alco C628's looked and sounded tough.

Alexandria, Va., to Portland, Maine, via B&O, Reading, Lehigh Valley, D&H, and Boston & Maine. As we spoke, a single C628 curved around the consist from the south and continued north. After crossing over, it returned south and coupled on to NE-84's head end. Thanking the crewman for his information, I walked up to the Belmont Street crossing while m.u. hoses were connected and duffel bags and grips were transferred. Would they depart before my rendezvous time with my family?

An answer was soon to come, as two blasts on the horns presaged a billow of Alco exhaust. Within 1500 feet the five C628's were moving at 15 mph, accompanied by a crescendo of noise as the locomotives were notched out. They curved across the Lackawanna River, blowing for the other crossings in Carbondale. Speed continued to pick up, and the sound of GE's began to grow. The caboose came into view, followed by twin U30C pushers, straining to give the train some speed, its head end by now feeling the effects of the steep climb out of Carbondale Yard toward Ararat Summit. The sound began to die as my mother pulled across the crossing in our family station wagon. I climbed in, knowing that special joy only we train-watchers know.

Thanks, Mom. Thanks to you, a trusting mother, for making the memory of this hot summer day a special one for me.

—Don Hodun **I**

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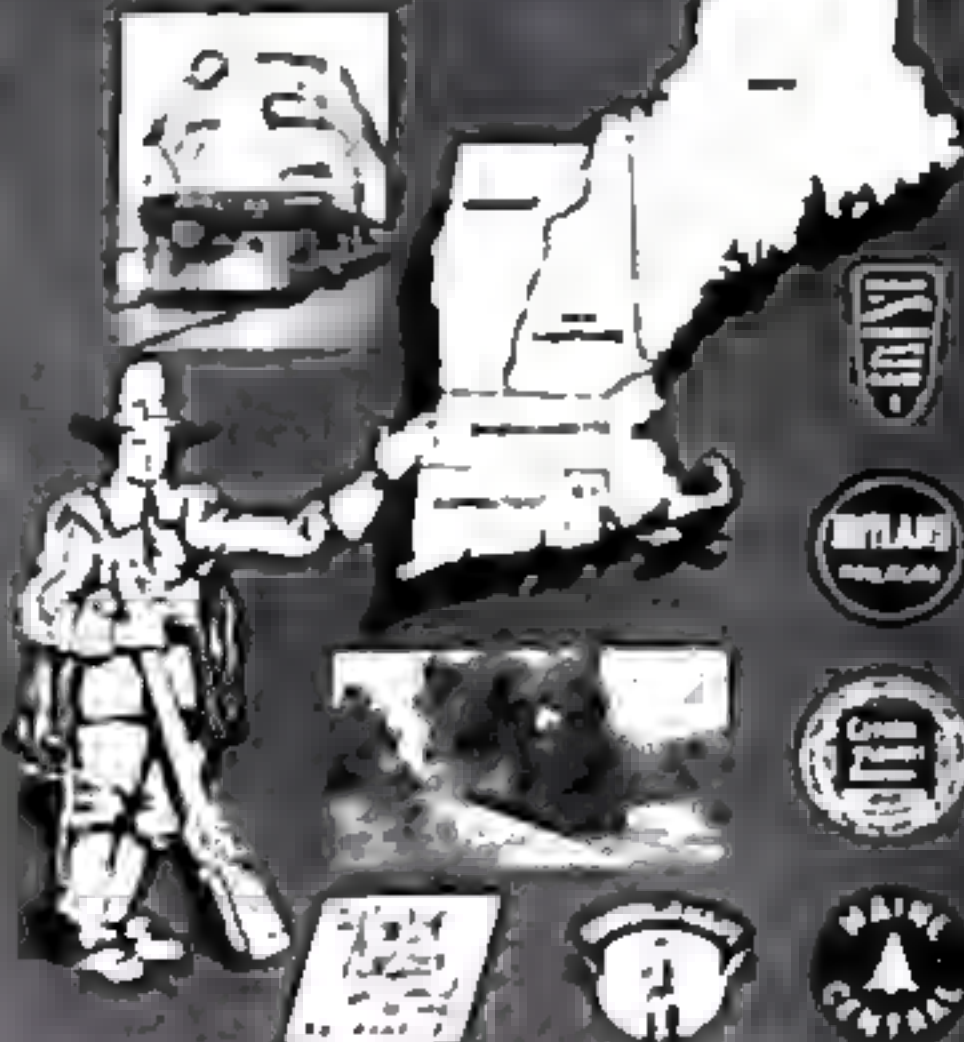
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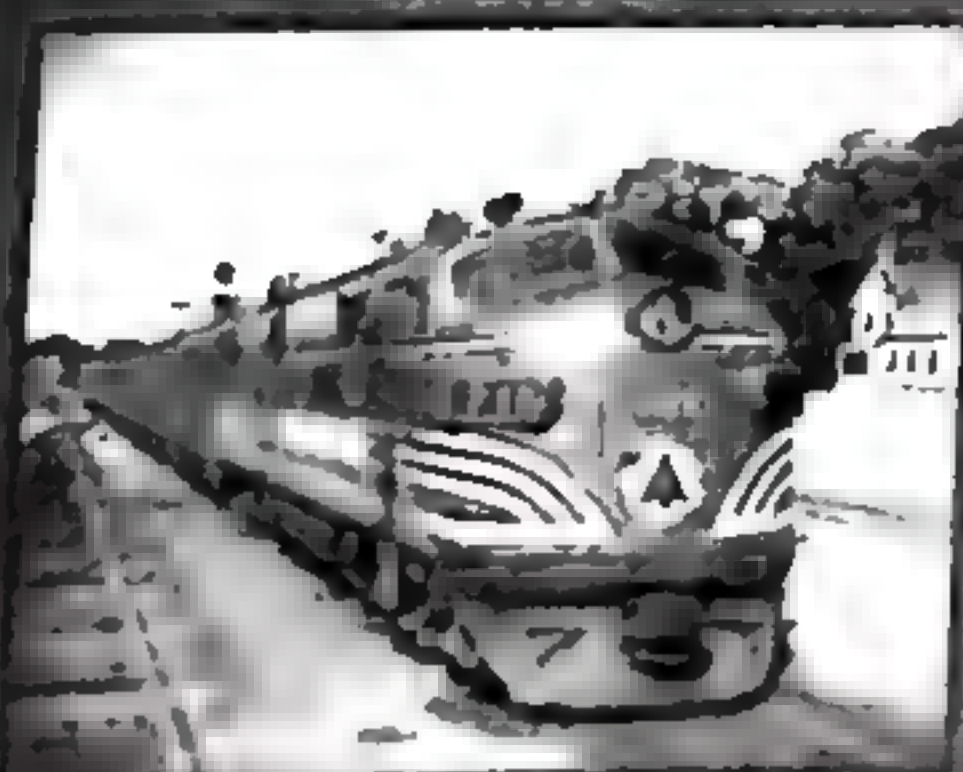
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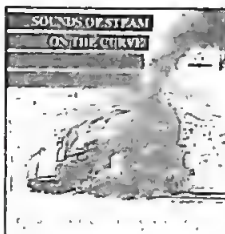
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—The Editors



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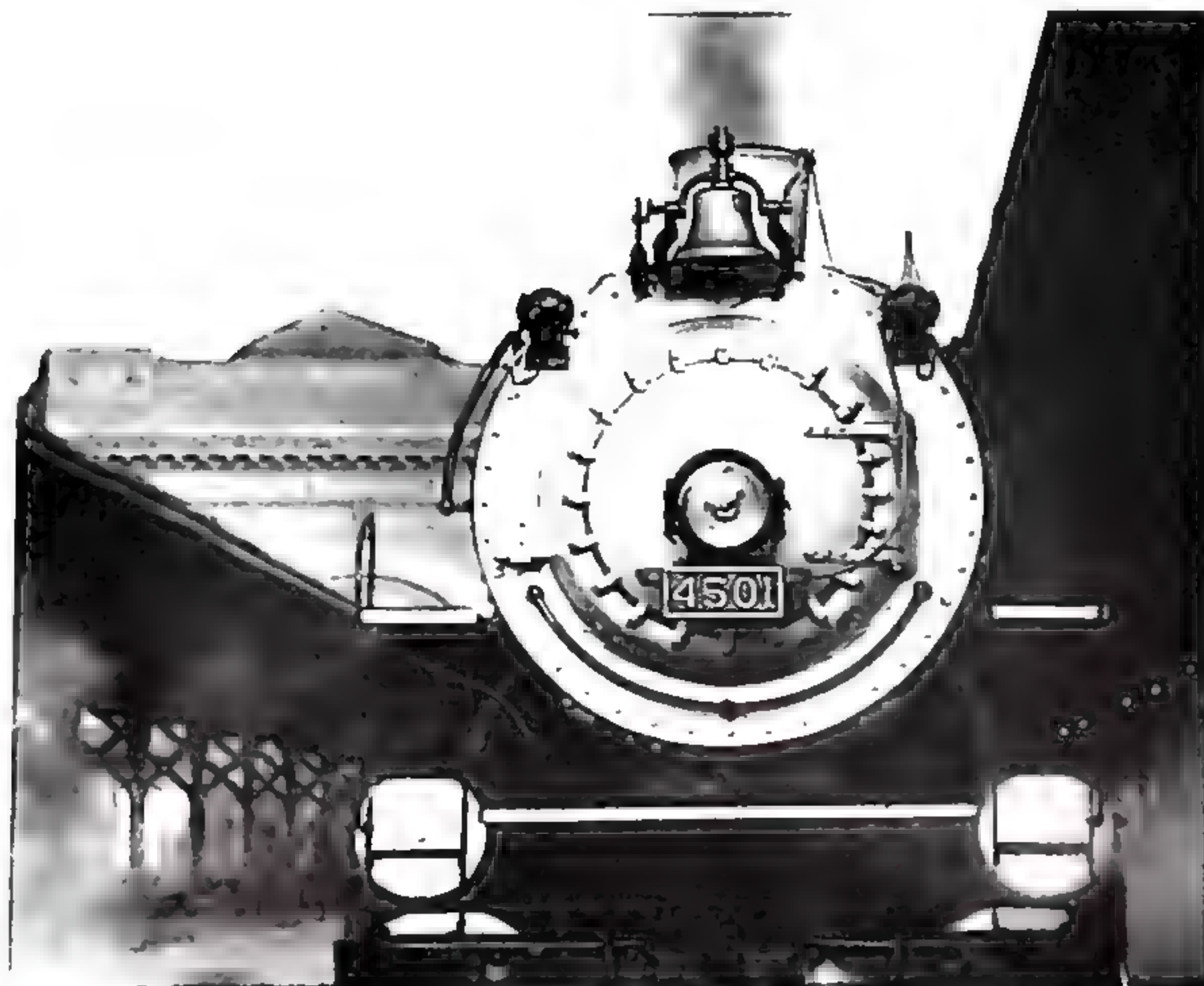
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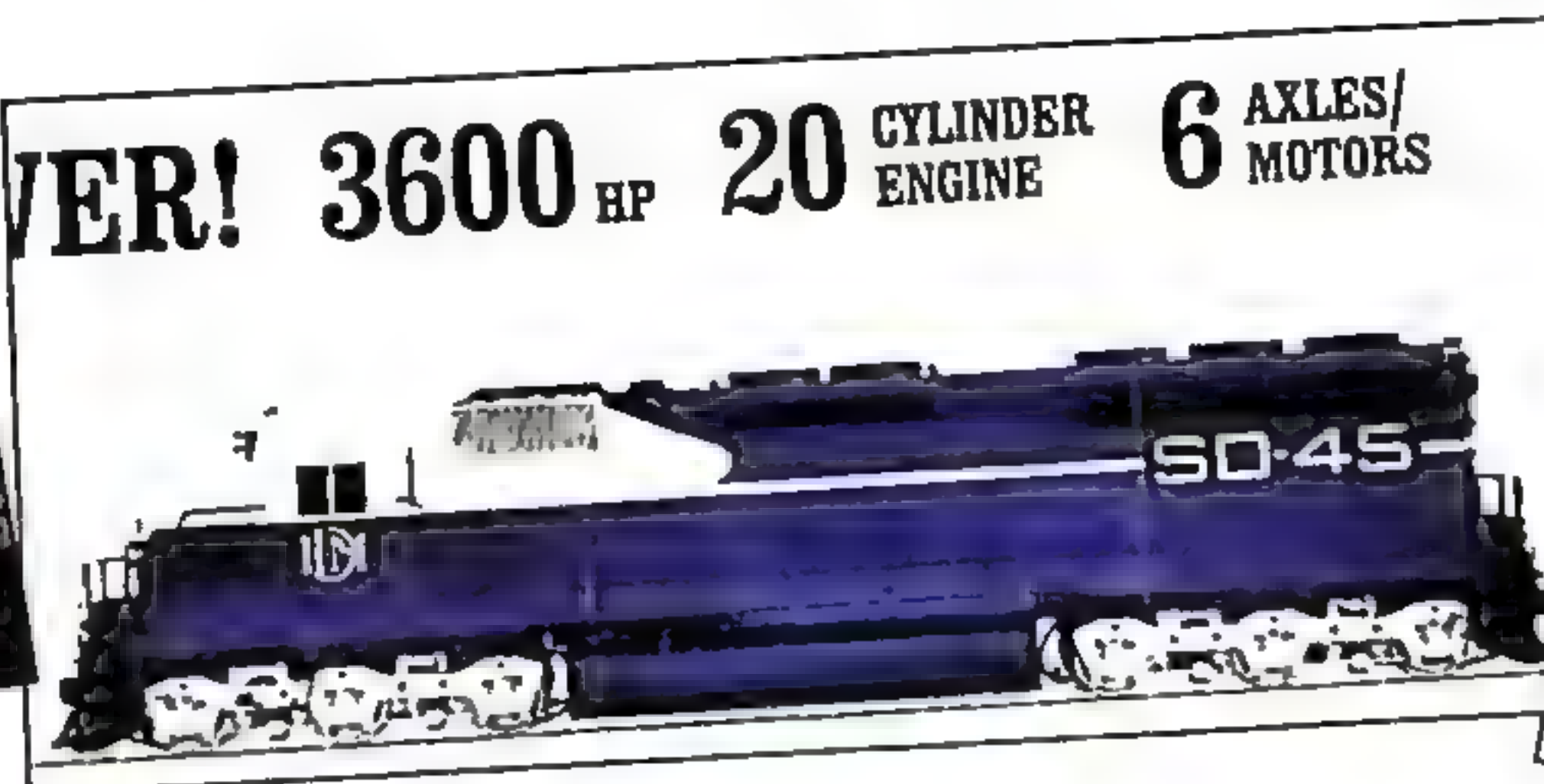
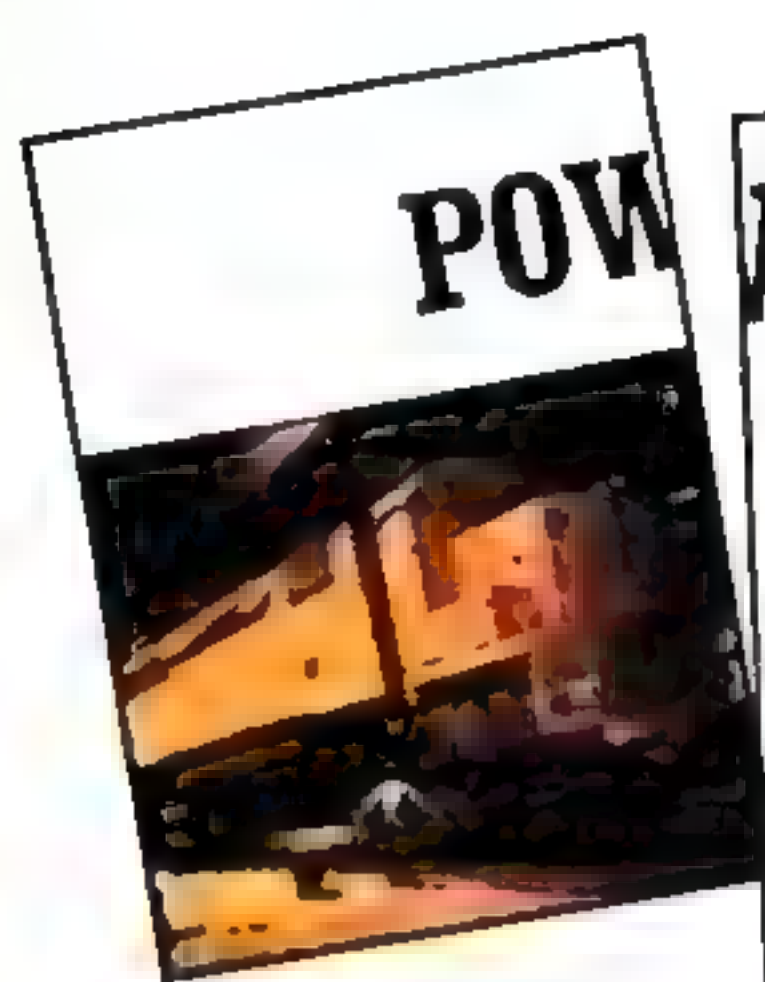
1966: SR steams up, EMD revs up

LOCOMOTIVE 4501:

From August 18 to 26, former Southern Railway 2-8-2 4501 roams from Chattanooga, Tenn., to the NRHS convention in Richmond, Va. The landmark journey led to more trips in '67, and SR's steam-excursion program was born, helping fill the void left when Burlington Route ended its steam trips, also in '66.



JOHN GRUBER



HORSEPOWER WARRIOR: A big centerspread foldout ad in the April '66 issue of TRAINS Magazine is part of the marketing blitz surrounding EMD's new SD45. The most powerful single-engine diesel to date, the SD45 is just what the doctor ordered for the "horsepower race" of the mid-'60's. Its flared radiators and optional "L"-shaped engineer's windshield signal that dieseldom's "second generation" has come of age.



PULLMAN-STANDARD

A PIONEER PASSES: Lucius Beebe, the large-living photographer and author of numerous railroad books and articles, including *High Iron* (1938), the first widely successful book in the popular railroad field, dies on February 4 at the age of 63.

TONNAGE TALLY TOPPED: U.S. railroads produce 743 million ton-miles in 1966, surpassing the previous record set in wartime 1944. Capital spending sets a record, too, and rate of return on investment is up as well. But despite a major airline strike, passenger traffic is down for the 15th straight year. Among the year's varnish casualties: EL's *Phoebe Snow*.



S. W. DEAN

BLIZZARDS OF '66: Big snow storms in the first three months of the year hit railroads hard in several regions, resulting in late trains, annulments, and detours. Here, Northern Pacific's westbound *Main-streeter*, rerouted onto the Great Northern across North Dakota, stops at GN's Fargo station in March.

RESEARCH, OR RED HERRING?: New York Central fits a standard Budd RDC3, M-497, with twin jet-aircraft engines, a streamlined nose, and other modifications for high-speed tests between Butler, Ind., and Stryker, Ohio. On July 23, the contraption sets a new U.S. rail speed record of 183.85 mph, but the achievement is overshadowed by news that broke the day before. NYC, the *Wall Street Journal* learns, is planning to ask the ICC for permission to drop all its long-distance passenger trains (including the fabled *20th Century Limited*) plus all dining, lounge, and sleeping cars. M-497 returned to regular service, and soon the *Century* and its mates began falling.



GEORGE W. METZ

THE LADIES VANISH: The Pennsylvania Railroad's seemingly invincible fleet of 139 GG1 electrics is reduced to 136 in March when the first to be retired—Nos. 4804, 4831, and 4847—are white-lined.

OTHER DIESEL DOINGS: Alco unveils the C415 switcher; despite having a center cab for better crew visibility, the pint-sized addition to the Century line sells only 26 units. General Electric, meanwhile, rings down the curtain on its ground-breaking U25B, replacing it with 28- and 30-series models, including 10 U28CG's in Warbonnet livery for long-haul Santa Fe passenger trains.

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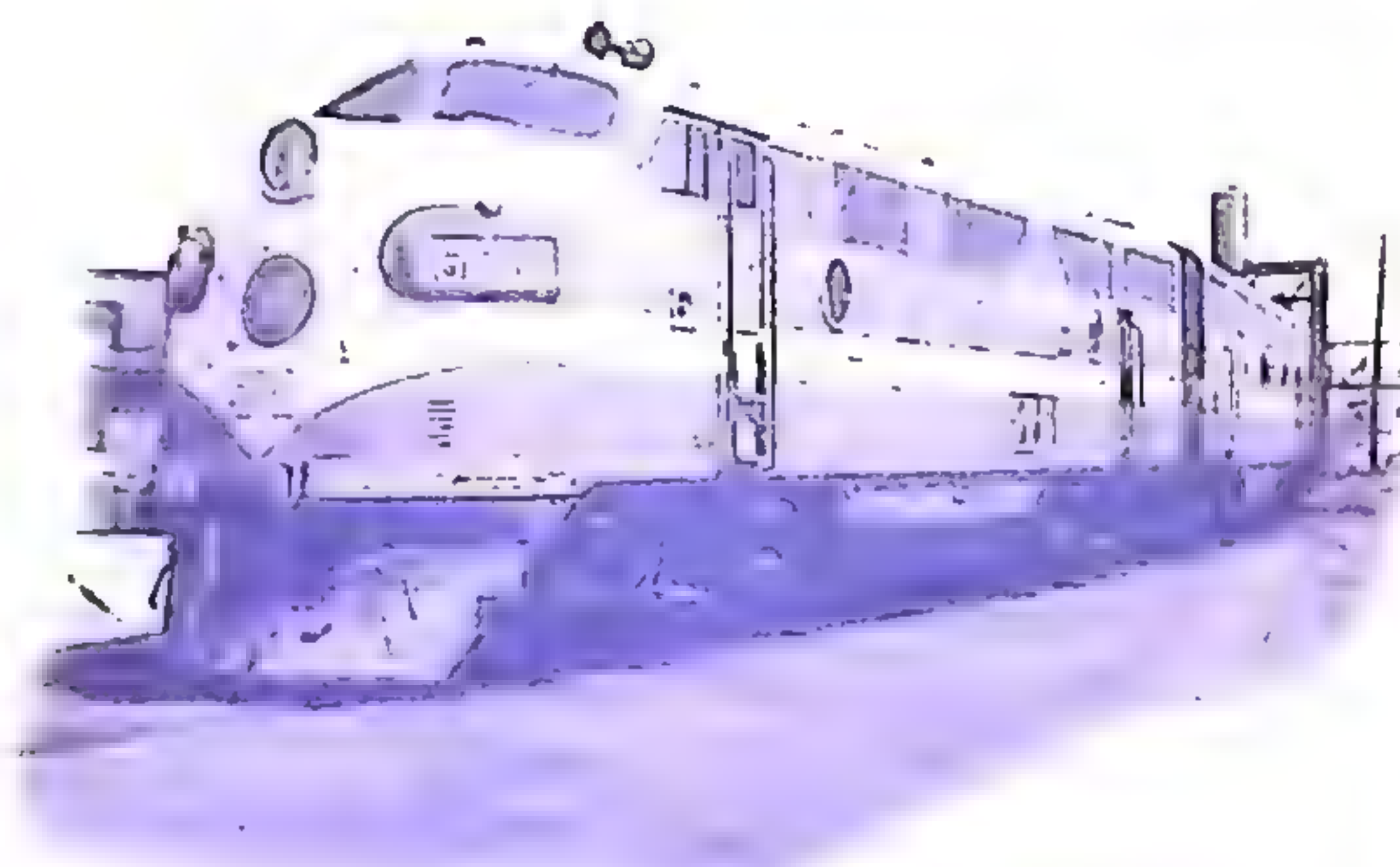
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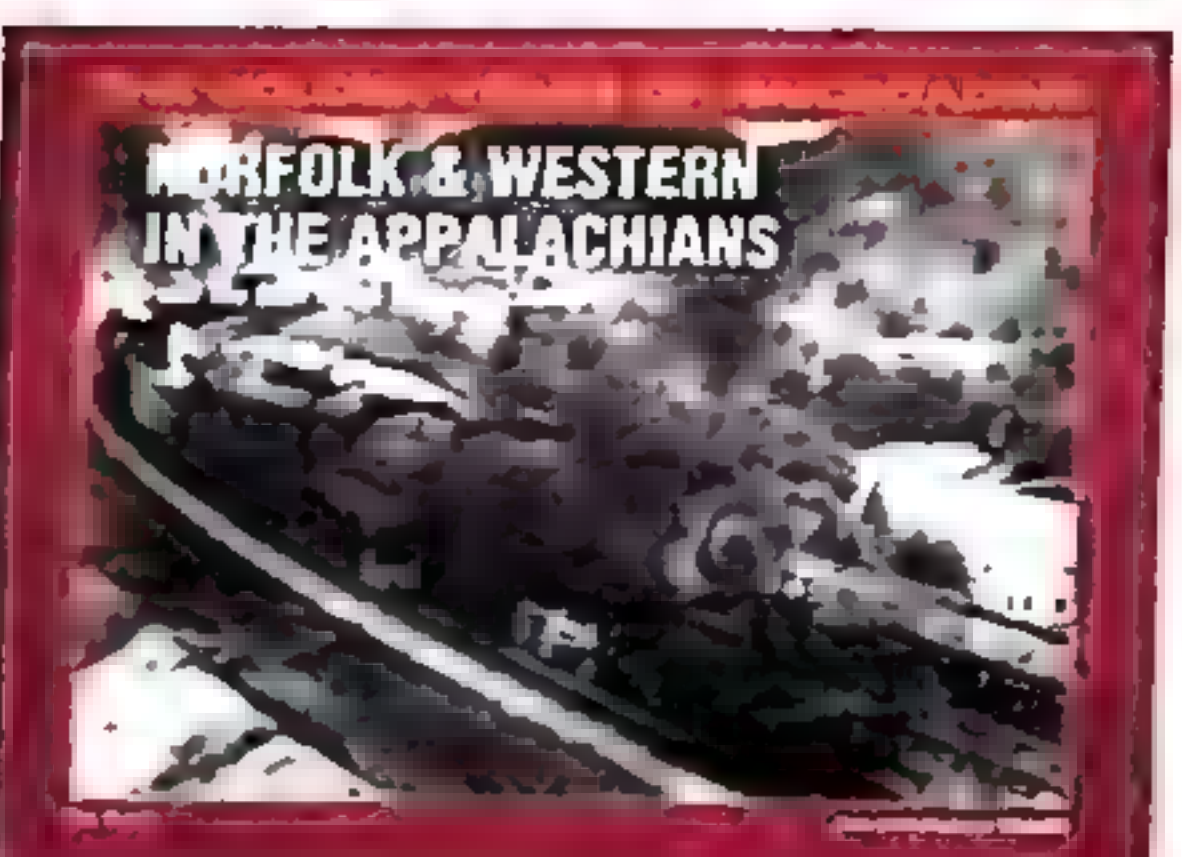
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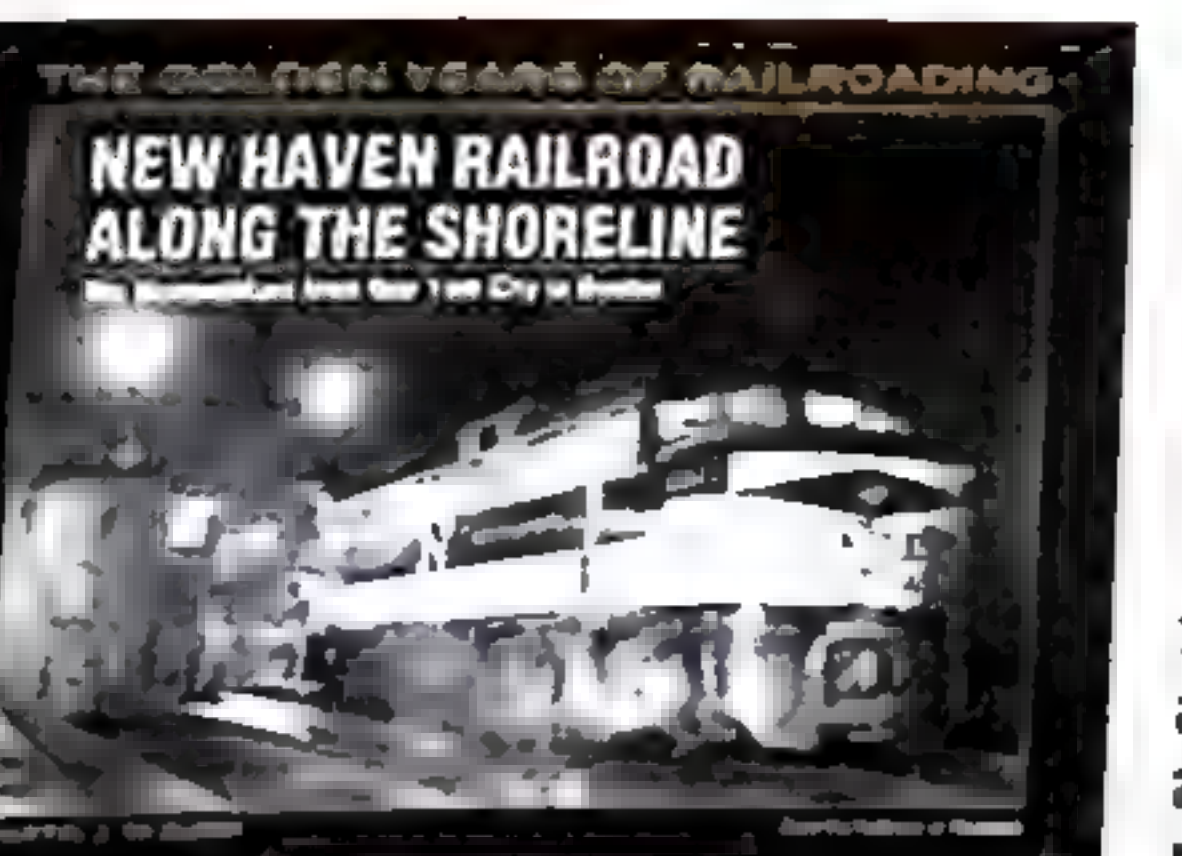
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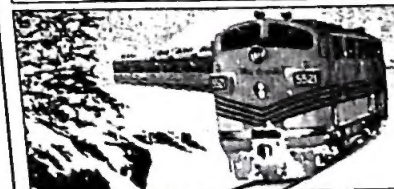
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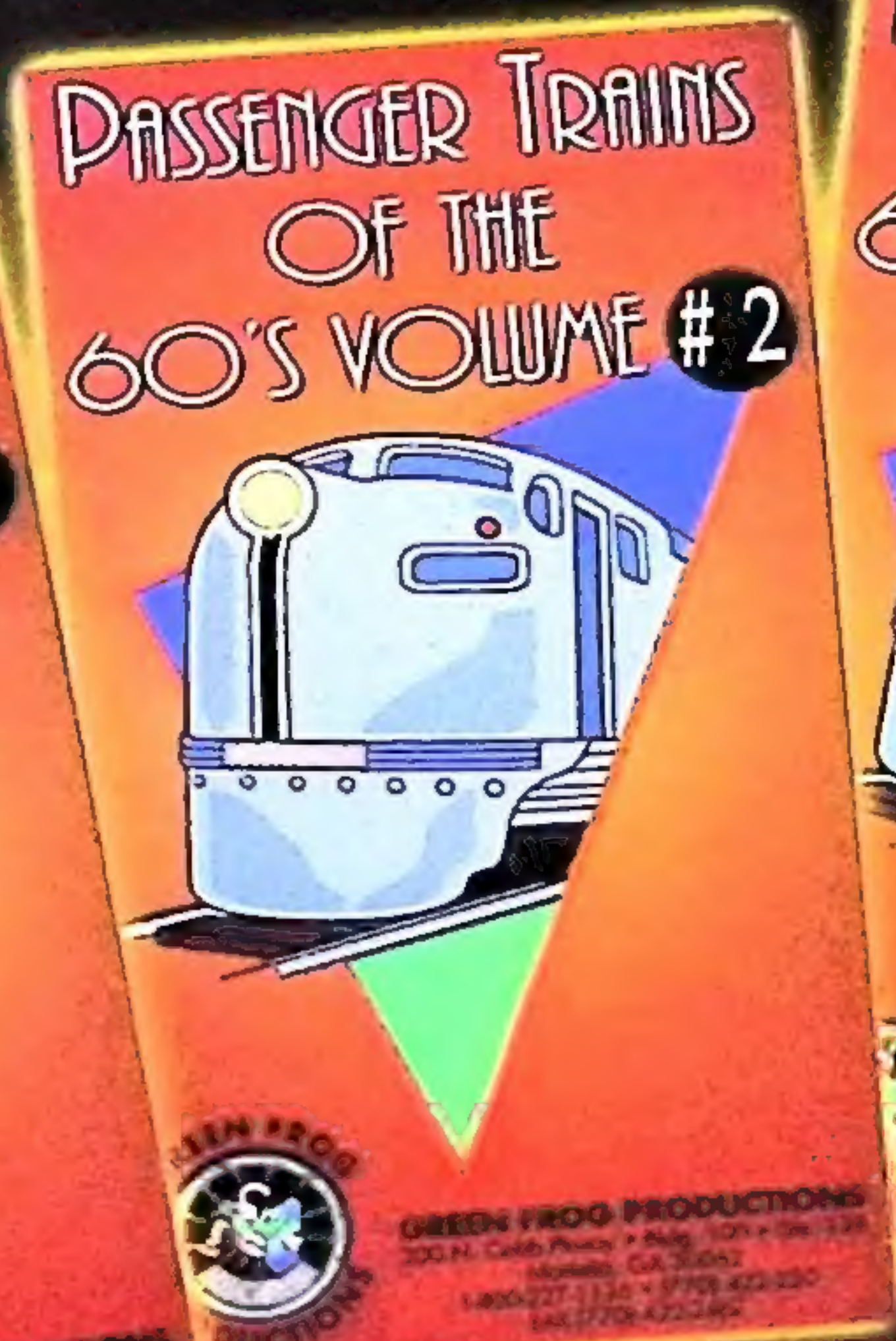
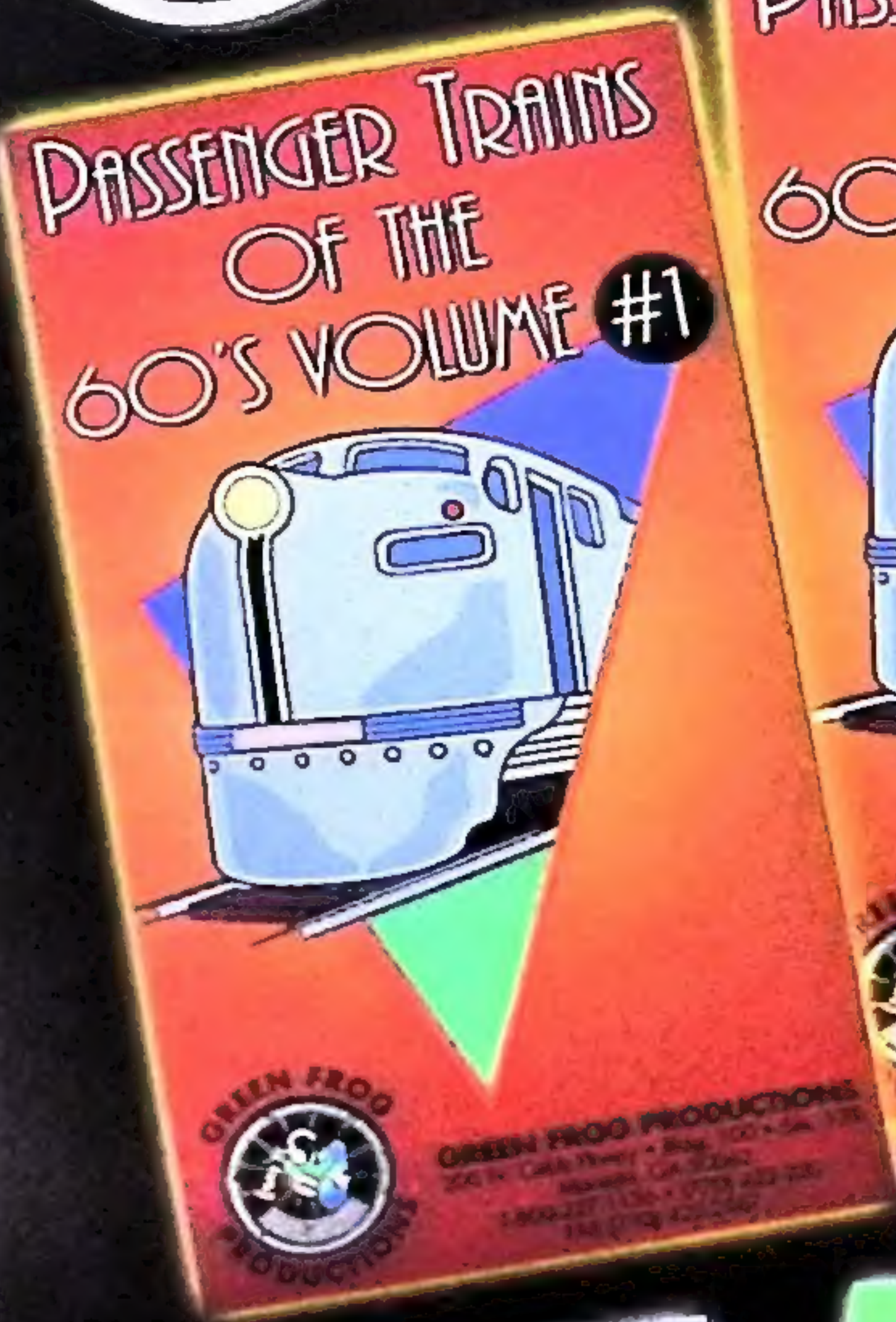
PHILIP A. WEIBLER

Bumping Post

Arches and dome

TWO GRACEFUL AND ENDURING architectural forms—the arch and its three-dimensional variant, the dome—are seen in this late-1960's view of Baltimore & Ohio's *Capitol Limited* at Grand Central Station in Chicago. Overhead, the 119x555-foot trainshed is formed of 15 steel arches, each describing a perfect semi-circle. At track level, E8 1447 wears B&O's herald, with its likeness of the U.S. Capitol dome. Grand Central was filled with architectural riches, but it came down anyway, in 1970. Today, its site remains vacant. **1**

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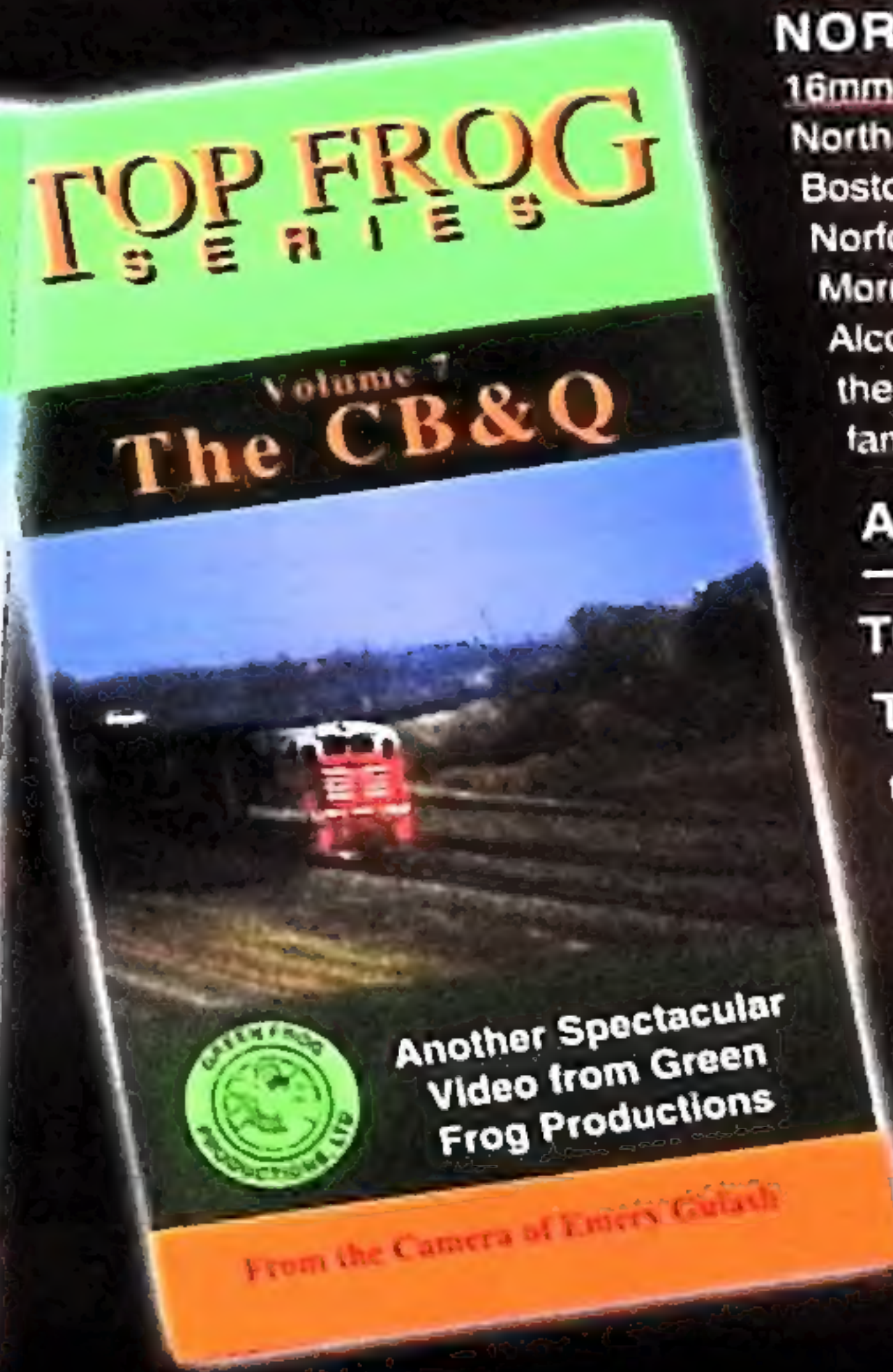
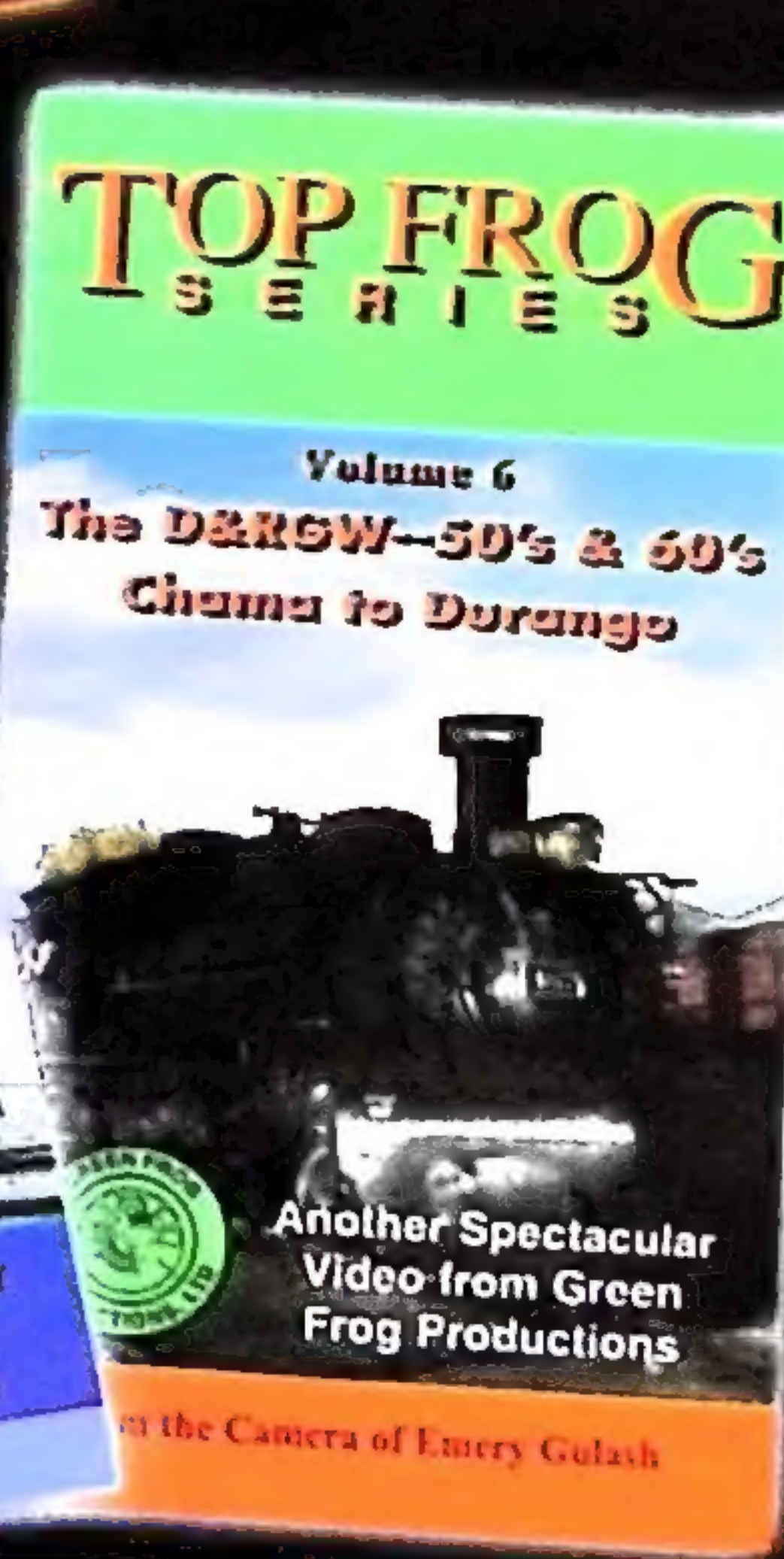


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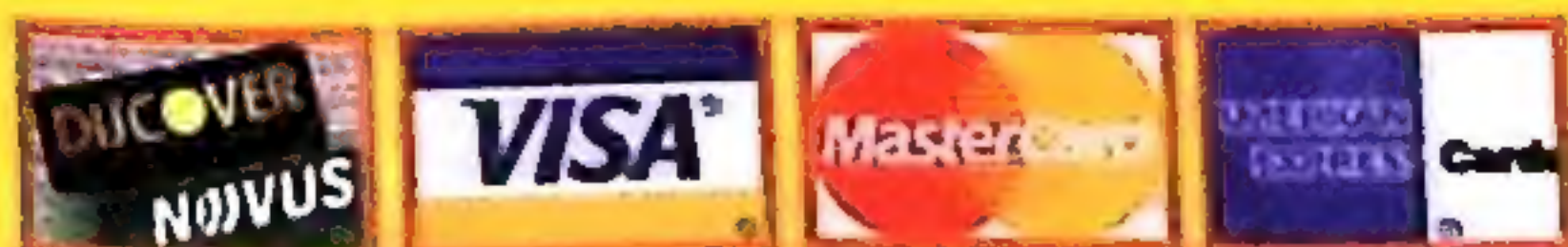
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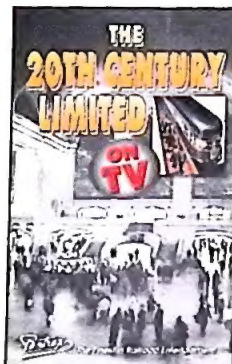
Our program begins at WP's Oakland Yards, with the 1872 Baldwin-built *Genoa* and 1909 Alco #94 locomotives under steam. A crude wooden combination car is led by the *Genoa*, and No. 94 heads up Lucius Beebe's elegant *Gold Coast*. Pulling up to the cameras alongside the steamers is WP's powerful new F-unit, #803-A, the pride of its fleet. (At the time this program was aired, WP had been fully dieselized for three years.)

No program about Western Pacific is complete without a good look at the *California Zephyr*. You'll see many views of the *Zephyr* on the Feather River Route and in the shops being cleaned and serviced. Highlights include tours of the commissary, linen warehouse, meat lockers, dining car attendants' classroom, and the Sacramento shops. Inside views include the lounge, dining car, and the famous vista domes. Thanks to this historic gem of a film, we can take a nostalgic journey back to the time when Western Pacific was the role model for the American success story!

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Once the train is underway, we move to Tower A where the Director demonstrates his control board. Back at the concourse ticket window and Pullman reservation office, we see how tickets were booked before computerization. Inside the dispatcher's office, telegraph keys sing in the background while the Trainmaster gives us further information. Then we're inside the cab of the moving train for a brief chat with the engineer. These scenes and others make *The 20th Century Limited on TV* a priceless piece of railroading history you'll delight in watching over and over again!

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